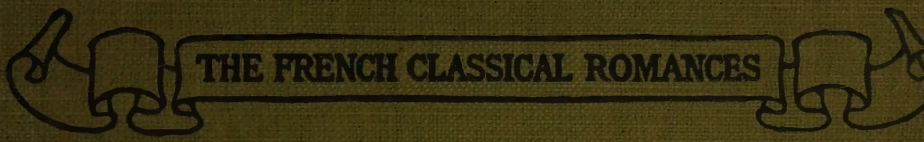
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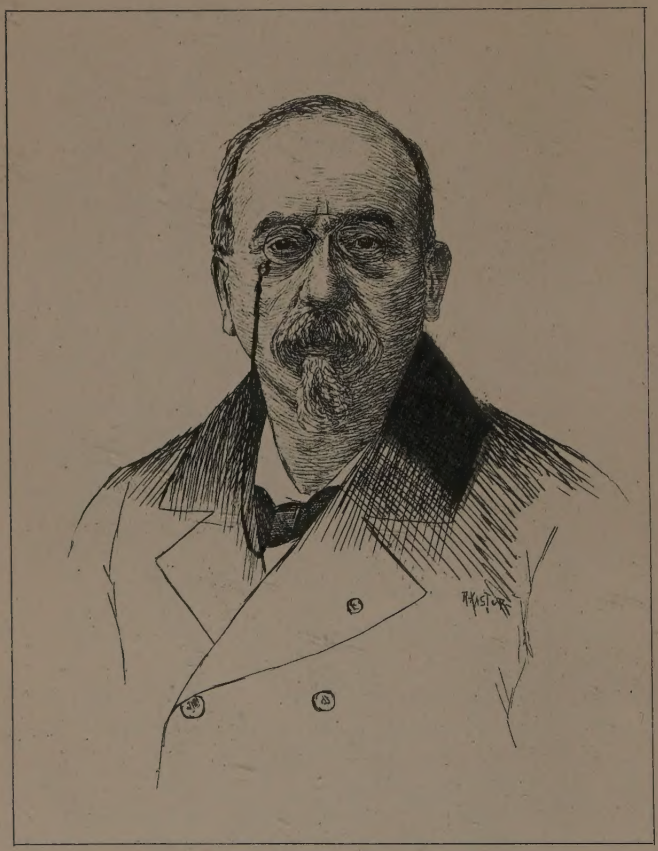

Victor Cherbuliez

VICTOR CHERBULIEZ

Samuel Brohl & Company

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

WITH A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION
BY BOOTH TARKINGTON

A FRONTISPIECE AND NUMEROUS
OTHER PORTRAITS WITH
DESCRIPTIVE NOTES BY
OCTAVE UZANNE

P. F. COLLIER & SON
NEW YORK

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VICTOR CHERBULIEZ AND "SAMUEL BROHL AND CO."

PROFESSOR SAINTSBURY, writing in 1878, devotes several pages of his essay on Victor Cherbuliez to *Meta Holdenis*, several to *Le Roman d'une Honnête Femme*, and part of a paragraph to *Samuel Brohl et Cie.*, classing the last with *Le Fiancé de Mademoiselle St. Maur*. These two novels, declared Professor Saintsbury, held "a middle place in point of merit," *Le Fiancé de Mademoiselle St. Maur* being a little below M. Cherbuliez's average, *Samuel Brohl et Cie.* a little above it. And yet it is through *Samuel Brohl et Cie.* that the charm of Victor Cherbuliez has best survived in appeal to the English-speaking reader. The gods forfend me from the accusation that I claim popularity and survival as demonstrations of the superiority of this book. Doubtless in heaven there exists an academy of seraphim ordained to place books and writers in their rank; on earth the thing is impossible, unless there is a practica-

30089

bility in Professor Moulton's plea for a century or two of the observation of literature (after the method of biologists) to be followed by a purely inductive criticism. After all, there is little satisfaction in placing and ranking, save to the placer —that is one man—and to the author placed—another one man; and there you have but two men possibly agreed, even though the process shall have been most exhaustive. And in the end, men do not place the books; the books somehow place themselves, often wickedly enough. Hasten we, then, to record the survival and popularity of *Samuel Brohl et Cie.* solely as fact, not necessarily as a proof of superiority, M. le Compte Abel Larinski the Second now approaching his fourth decade.

The dry-boned analyst (who, contrary to the untruthful epigram, never exhibits so much as an approach to the cheerful laxity of madness) might immediately gird up his loins to treat our Samuel's continuing existence as an intricate, painful secret, offering process upon him with morbid dissectiveness, as "A. *Novelty of Theme*; B. *Consistency of Treatment*," and so on to the estimable conclusion that when interesting matter is fitted with an appropriate manner of recital, a patient or even an approving hearing is probably to be ob-

tained. Alfred de Musset presented to the world his discovery that Time bears all away upon his pinion; and from some terrors a merciful class-day has released us. Therefore, in joy of that liberation, let us flee the class-room with footprints never returning!

Samuel Brohl et Cie. was first published in 1877, the year in which Daudet offered *Le Nabab*, *Jack* having appeared a twelvemonth earlier; Gautier had been dead five years; Guy de Maupassant was unknown; Victor Hugo's *Quatre-vingt-treize* was three years old, Feuillet's *Un Mariage dans le Monde* but two, Flaubert's *L'Éducation Sentimentale* eight; and M. Cherbuliez had already presented to the puzzled critics a series of novels, which, while here and there tinkling the lightest echo of all these authors, except de Maupassant and Hugo, were in no case complete exponents of either naturalism, realism, or romanticism, *Samuel Brohl et Cie.* refusing more than any other to place itself under one of these heads. It was not entirely of choice that M. Cherbuliez was a little mystifying; for, although he was exceedingly French, he was never altogether a Frenchman. Born, like the greatest of his kin, Jean Jacques Rousseau, in Geneva, he had been but seven years a naturalized Frenchman

when *Samuel Brohl* appeared, and had yet to wait five years before his election to the French Academy.

Edmond Sherer, coming home somewhat querulous from M. Cherbuliez's reception into the Academy, transcribed a hint of complaint that the new Academician had been recognised more as a novelist than as a political writer and archæologist. It is not difficult to perceive in this protest a faded heirloom of that disposition of the centuries to regard fictitious narratives as ephemeral entertainments, fripperies for the dull fireside. M. Sherer regretted that M. Victor Cherbuliez had not been allowed a firmer pedestal than this flimsy; and, wishing well to the initiate, he would have preferred for him something more solid than a fluttering of hands to the mere Jongleur. Here a mind incapable of distinguishing any inward separation between the phenomena of religion, science, and art must profess itself at fault. For, if the reader will forgive a trifle of grocery-stove sententiousness, art does appear to be little more or less than intuitive science. "A man gives the truth as he sees it"; the artist makes a bit of scientific observation vivid, be the method of his presentation called "romanticism," "realism," "symbolism," or what you will.

So the worthy novelist, sensitizing his gelatined consciousness to impressions, presents you with the figured plate, and willy-nilly becomes a moralist, whether he intends a "lesson" or no, since he pictures a section of the truth, and any atom of the truth, shown saliently, is, like all of the truth, moral, and may be considered (by those who choose) in the light of a benevolent precept. M. Sherer might have ceased to repine; because as no more than a novelist M. Cherbuliez deserved well of his country, and even in that profession may be esteemed as of an equal civic respectability with the botanist or retired clergyman.

Nevertheless, M. Cherbuliez's operations are as remote from the field of sermonizing as are those of Gautier himself. Even *Le Roman d'une Honnête Femme* discloses not the faintest trail of the tract. When the French novelist goes in for tractism he usually becomes either an artillerist of siege-guns, like Hugo, or a pick-and-microscope geologist, like Émile Zola. M. Cherbuliez is the daintiest of filigree workers.

The interstices of omission in his productions are as finely considered as the tracery itself; indeed, it is the delicate shaping that lends brilliancy to the silver of the design; and *Samuel Brohl et Cie.* is quite as charming an example of

the skilfulness of his hand as of the liveliness of his fancy. Nor would any skill but the most excellent have sufficed for that fancy which created the strange hero of this story. We may say at once that none but Victor Cherbuliez could have suited himself so precisely to the needs of the eerie Samuel, and that the singer and the song came together when these two met.

In no other of his novels has our author more dexterously employed his favourite device, the introduction of letters from one character to another, than in *Samuel Brohl et Cie.*, for there is no mechanism in fiction which more subtly increases the flavour of aloofness (hence impartiality) in the novelist, and gives that effect which Cherbuliez sought of intangibility attaching to the creator. The author disappears in proportion as the characters in a book emerge and seem to induce their own story; so the novel dons a self-existent air and therefore a greater reality. Yet, in the too copious introduction of letters there is always the danger of dulness, a calamity which M. Cherbuliez has avoided by allowing his people to write almost as well as himself, investing them with his own careful sense of omission, while preserving for them their own standpoints, their sincerity, or their duplicity. The four long letters of Mme.

de Lorcy are almost as invaluable as that brief *chef-d'œuvre* of the indomitable Larinski refusing the interview which Antoinette proposes: "This test would be more than my courage could withstand. I shall never see you again, for if I were to see you I should be a lost man."

The epistles of Mme. de Lorcy remind one of the masterly missives of the Marquis de Miraval in *Le Roi Apêpi*, not on account of similarity, but because of a delicate contrast, the letters of both being things to rejoice in. The marquis reaches the height of his comedy in the confession to Mme. Veretz of his passion for fishing, but perhaps he reaches the height of himself when he sketches Mme. de Corneuil to his niece. Of Mme. de Corneuil's novel the marquis writes:

"I confess I did not read it through to the end; every variety of courage is not to be expected of one person. It began with a description of a mist. At the end of ten pages the fog lifted—Heaven be praised!—and a woman in a calèche became visible. I remember that the calèche was bought of Binder; that the woman (whose heart was an abyss) wore six and one-quarter gloves; that she had three freckles on her right temple—precisely three and no more—'quiv-

ering nostrils, inimitably rounded arms, and breathless silences.' . . . I rushed away. My mind is so poorly constructed that I cannot see this woman with whose description the author has taken such pains. Good Homer, who is not of the new school, contented himself with telling me merely that Achilles was fair, and yet I can see him before me. . . . As I am no longer young I agree with Voltaire, who did not like those subjects to be seriously discussed which were not worth being lightly touched upon."

M. Cherbuliez's portraiture is not that of Mme. de Corneuil. With him, as with (most particularly) Henry James, the reader perceives the appearance of the heroine by degrees; she is never painted in detail at her first entrance; we are presented with a quick sketch more of her significance than of her looks; it is only at the end that we find we have realized her. So it is in Mr. James's odd and charming twenty-minutes-for-refreshments farce called *Covering End.* Only in the daze of finishing the whirl of movement do we discover ourselves in possession of the delectable Mrs. Gracedew—or rather the delectable Mrs. Gracedew in possession of ourselves. So artfully has the brilliant, tender, generous lady come upon us that we see her some time before

we are amazed at the clearness with which we do see her.

The eyes of Abel Larinski rest upon Mlle. Moriaz for the first time in the cathedral of Chur, and the reader stands beside him also to experience a thrill in the first light outlines of the lady; it is in the savage pass of Bergünerstein, as Antoinette moves away from the parapet, that we are permitted to notice the detail of her twelve-button gloves. These twelve-button gloves, carrying with them their fine flavour of Paris in 1875, are of inestimable value. They "visualize" Antoinette for us as the drift of apple-blossoms clarifies the poet's April hillside, or as the horse-hair sofa sketches a room in a New England story; and we thoroughly comprehend the railway time-table promptness of the return of M. Langis, when we catch this glimpse of the twelve-button gloves. Twelve-button gloves upon a lady who was twenty-four years of age some time in the seventies, and there you have M. Victor Cherbuliez in love!

M. Cherbuliez in love with Antoinette, nevertheless remembers that he "has the advantage" of the lady in years; his gallantry is a little humorous; unlike Mlle. Moiseney, he retains something of the chaperon, and his manner with her is too light for the mere "admiration-point."

Mlle. Antoinette is one of M. Cherbuliez's people; he likes her, and is content not to study her too attentively; she has all the more charm for that. It is a habit of his not to bend a severe scrutiny upon women; even his examination of the sensationalist, Meta Holdenis, is light; indeed, he may not be esteemed severe even with his men, notwithstanding the certainty that many of them are revealed as essentially false, mean, or stupid. It is his lightness that is to be thanked; and perhaps the winsomeness we find in him is better attributed to that than to his humour, both being exquisite, most exquisite of all in the two ingenious comedies, *Samuel Brohl et Cie.* and *Le Roi Apêpi.*

This lightness is of a peculiar bouquet, not quite to be labelled and with puzzling differences from the other French vintages, since French fiction has ethereality enough, in Heaven's name, at almost all times, but our taste for the brand is often regulated by the period of the output. For are not most French writers of fiction of a mercurial impressionableness, flying into schools quite as enthusiastically as the painters, and marvellously alert to suggestion? M. Cherbuliez's particular bouquet, not without its prototype in France, was nevertheless needed there; but to those people

who had read only English or American books it was (in the seventies) as unfamiliar as delightful. Since then, many English and American writers of prose have proved themselves its debtors.

Quite apart from things literary, technical, or all craftsman pleasures, and assuming the point of view of the mere Christian desirous of living as happily as possible, we may profess ourselves in debt more for sorrow than for joyfulness to undoubtedly a majority of the greater novelists of France. Therefore we care more for M. Cherbuliez that he has been more in love with gaiety than his contemporaries have shown themselves. Our joy in Samuel Brohl is permitted to be wholesouled and on all accounts. Nor may the English reader be denied his pleasure in an author whose attitude towards life and whose tastes are those of a gentleman. For, like Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Philanderer*, some of our dearest French novelists (Flaubert and Gautier, for instance, and hail to them!) are either a great deal more or a great deal less than gentlemen, but certainly not "always gentlemen."

What critic may cavil at the good citizen who desires pleasure in his reading? Must his pleasure be altogether in the technique? And shall he not of two books, somewhat equally dexterous in

construction, prefer that which is to his greater happiness and health? We are "middling tired" of the word "technique" and of "workmanship," "craftsmanship" and their kin. Sometimes it does appear that people who have to do with novels present themselves in two classes to the simple eye: in one, those without guile who read aboriginally, to whom a novel is a yarn they like or do not like, that being an end of the matter; also those who pursue the Study of Literature (particularly as connected with the Ideal Life), thus grandiosely phrasing their observations in clubs and similar respectable resorts; in the other class, the people who think with "delighted pains" about how the novels are made. Sometimes one of these two classes culls a bit from the vocabulary of the other, but essentially they speak a different language and are able to hold little intelligible conversation one with the other. They irritate each other extremely, the creeds of the second proving but mystifying harassments to the first, and the enthusiasms of the first bringing a wondering sorrow to the second. How cheery the occasion, then, when a novelist arises in whom both may rejoice, and how gay a thing it is that M. Cherbuliez has been good for more than France!

There was once considerable evidence of a dis-

position on the part of the Parisian critics to label Cherbuliez as bizarre, because, in his filigree working, he exhibited ability to construct the most delicately ingenious plots of his time, and because of certain sudden delightful trifles of exaggeration (a touch of farce at times) in his style. As an example of the latter we have Camille Langis, notably in the first interview with the drowsy father of Antoinette. But the critics have long since ceased to call our author bizarre, not because he became a member of the Academy, but because when one grows accustomed to a new thing it is no longer strange. By the allusion to his ingenuity in plot-construction it is not meant that M. Cherbuliez took pleasure in projecting an intricate series of events; the manufactured plot was, of course, as abhorrent to him as manufactured atmosphere would have been. No, he is the master of surprise, and the novel offering greatest evidence of such mastery is *Samuel Brohl et Cie.*, most nearly approached by *Le Roi Apêpi*; the latter a quaint and amusing comedietta, the former a finished comedy. M. Cherbuliez's surprises are artful; there are not too many of them. In *Le Roi Apêpi* there is only one. An author who surprises us too often ends by being unable to do so at all, for each shock weakens the force of the next—as

in the case of people from whom we have learned to expect anything whatever—they become bores after a time, none more commonplace.

M. Cherbuliez's surprise is the deftest contrivance in the world, so adroit and so free-running that it seems rough to speak of it as a contrivance. It is a revelation sufficiently sudden to take the reader's breath, yet never abrupt; so that one reads the incredible passage twice in some agitation, the consciousness of the brilliant stroke finally coming sharply. Nevertheless, the revelation has been predicted on every previous page of the book; it has been distinctly foreshadowed a dozen times; and here is where the author's adeptness appears—the reader can see the foreshadowings only afterward. And yet the surprise is always more than legitimate, it is inevitable. All this is the opposite of the dénouement of the detective story which is always a disappointment, because it comes when the author, having puzzled his reader as long as possible, offers the solution in order to close the book, as in opera-bouffe the father or duke relents at the exact time when the audience begins to think of the supper-card. M. Cherbuliez is never purposely puzzling; that is why his surprises do so effectually surprise.

Stevenson has written of the great dramatic

moments of fictitious narrative, citing two—Robinson Crusoe discovering the footprint in the sand, and Christian coming up out of the Slough of Despond—as mental pictures almost universal with readers of English. For more than a century and a half, scarce an English or American memory could have been dissected without bringing to light these two sketches. Nor do many books "last," as they say, which do not contain a moment so vital that the reader must illustrate it by a mental image which remains with him. Such a moment is the author's acme of dramatic achievement; and, strangely enough, the reader is usually left to supply the colours and fill in the background himself, unconscious that he does so. Nothing could be more distinct than the whole scene of the fainting in Mme. de Lorcy's salon, with Camille Langis insulting the inanimate comedian on the sofa, nor than that of the final interview between the two men. But in the scene of the revelation of the relations between Samuel Brohl and his familiar, the surroundings are charmingly sketched. This interview between the man and the part he plays, between the actor and the character he has built up, forms the most remarkable passage in all M. Cherbuliez's writing; wonderful is no immoderate word for it. And because it is

so quiet, so airy, and so light, the artist has felt the necessity of a landscape in harmony, a grove of oaks on the high ground, whence could be seen, through the sylvan openings, "Saint-Germain, its forests, and the Seine glittering in the sunshine, with the two bridges of Maisons Lafitte spanning it with their arches. . . . He caught a glimpse, to his left, of the proud bastions of Mont-Valérien, and, in the distance, Paris, the Arc de l'Étoile, the gilt dome of the Invalides, and the smoke of the factories rising slowly in the air, then by turns remaining poised and motionless, or being swept away by the wind. . . . The place was retired, solitary, very still. No sound could be heard save the singing of a lark, and at intervals the melancholy cry of a peacock. . . . He watched the smoke over Paris, and he beheld floating in it an ethereal form whose face was partly concealed in a red hood." Thus gently, conducted by a strolling pair, a poet and a painter, the reader approaches the astonishing disclosure of Samuel's duality, a disclosure which might have been the forerunner of that in the case of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; but in the instance of Samuel it is Mr. Hyde who creates Dr. Jekyll; our extraordinary Jew is a comedian, not a tragedian; and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is possibly a fine modern

variation of the Faustus allegory, while *Samuel Brohl et Cie.* is the most notable portrait of the essential social adventurer presented in all prose fiction.

M. Cherbuliez shunned tragedy in all his novels, except *L'Aventure de Ladislas Bolski* and *La Revanche de Joseph Noirel*, so far as he was able; and it is his comedy which endures; a comedy of a gay, graceful kind, formerly little known to the English reader in his native reading. We are somewhat reminded of it by Mr. Meredith and Mr. James; of the former, whose comic muse has so profound a gaze, more by antithesis than by resemblance; of the latter by a remote, yet very pleasant similarity of spirit most apparent when Mr. James perceives the sun.

But, from our own point of view, it was to France that M. Cherbuliez was the greater gift; for though his kind of grace and gaiety came the fresher to America and to England, while France had much that resembled it, Cherbuliez stands for some things that no other French novelist has so well represented. It would be as well to forget that he wrote *La Revanche de Joseph Noirel*, and *L'Aventure de Ladislas Bolski*, two exceedingly interesting and depressing books, in which the real Cherbuliez did not express the true spirit of

himself. It is *Samuel Brohl et Cie.* which does that, far more than even the elaborate study of the alluring *Meta Holdenis.* And it is *Samuel Brohl et Cie.* in which the author's poise, taste, and ingenuity are best exemplified; for Cherbuliez had these three attributes in the finest proportion. Allowing the one book to stand for the man, how sorrowful an achievement we find *Salâmmbo*, for the more versatile Flaubert, with his love of physical agony and blood; how bombastic does Victor Hugo appear, on whose heroic mould Cherbuliez was not built; how sadly shines the soul of Daudet, whose *Tartarin* stories, even, have a melancholy tinge in retrospect; how saffron returns the golden charm of Gautier! Of course such comparisons are unfair, even on the "moral ground," and have nothing whatever to do with the art of letters. Nevertheless, in the ordeal of endurance, which is the judgment by feeling and not by art, it is a somewhat convincing test of excellence in a book that its candle shines the brighter through the lessened glimmer of others.

Booth Tarkington.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

CHARLES VICTOR CHERBULIEZ *was born at Geneva, on the 19th of July, 1829, the son of a Professor of Greek at the Swiss University. He was very carefully educated in Paris, Bonn, and Berlin, and early displayed a remarkable talent for the assimilation of knowledge. In his twenty-first year he made a tour in Greece and the East, the result being his earliest work, a romantic picture of Athenian art life, "Un Cheval de Phidias," 1860. He now turned his attention to fiction, and published in 1863, with success, "Le Comte Kostia." This was followed by "Le Prince Vitale," 1864; "Paule Méré," 1865; "Le Roman d'une Honnête Femme," 1866; "Prosper Randoce," 1868; "L'Aventure de Ladislas Bolski," 1869; "Meta Holdenis" (perhaps Cherbuliez's best-known novel), 1873. Meanwhile he was actively engaged as an art critic and as an exponent of foreign, particularly of German, current literature. In 1870 he published a volume on "L'Allemagne Politique";*

in 1874 one on "L'Espagne Politique"; and in 1877 on "Hommes et Choses d'Allemagne." He was a very industrious and persistent author, whose life was entirely absorbed in his literary work, and who offered no material for biographical curiosity. The later novels of Cherbuliez which attracted most attention were "Samuel Brohl et Cie," 1877; "L'Idée de Jean Têterol," 1878; "Amours Fragiles," 1880; "La Ferme du Choquart," 1883; and "Olivier Maugant," 1885. All these stories appeared in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," where, moreover, under the pseudonym of Valbert, he constantly published articles on current politics and literature. Cherbuliez, who became a citizen of France under the republic, was elected to the French Academy on the death of Dufaure, in 1881, and was received on the 25th of May, in the following year, by Renan, who complimented him on the universality of his intellectual aptitudes and on the suppleness of his talent. He died on the 2d of July, 1899.

E. G.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Victor Cherbuliez . . . . . v–xxii
Booth Tarkington

Life of Victor Cherbuliez . . . . . xxiii–xxiv
Edmund Gosse

Samuel Brohl and Company 1–347

The Portraits of Victor Cherbuliez . . 349–354
Octave Uzanne

SAMUEL BROHL AND COMPANY

CHAPTER I

Were the events of this nether sphere governed by the calculus of probabilities, Count Abel Larinski and Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz would almost unquestionably have arrived at the end of their respective careers without ever having met. Count Larinski lived in Vienna, Austria; Mlle. Moriaz never had been farther from Paris than Cormeilles, where she went every spring to remain throughout the fine weather. Neither at Cormeilles nor at Paris had she ever heard of Count Larinski; and he, on his part, was wholly unaware of the existence of Mlle. Moriaz. His mind was occupied with a gun of his own invention, which should have made his fortune, and which had not made it. He had hoped that this warlike weapon, a true *chef-d'œuvre*, in his opinion superior in precision and range to any other known, would be appreciated, according to its merits, by competent judges, and would one day be adopted for the equipment of

the entire Austro-Hungarian infantry. By means of unremitting perseverance, he had succeeded in obtaining the appointment of an official commission to examine it. The commission decided that the Larinski musket possessed certain advantages, but that it had three defects: it was too heavy, the breech became choked too rapidly with oil from the lubricator, and the cost of manufacture was too high. Count Abel did not lose courage. He gave himself up to study, devoted nearly two years to perfecting his invention, and applied all his increased skill to rendering his gun lighter and less costly. When put under test, the new firearm burst, and this vexatious incident ruined forever the reputation of the Larinski gun. Far from becoming enriched, the inventor had sunk his expenses, his advances of every kind; he had recklessly squandered both revenue and capital, which, to be sure, was not very considerable.

Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz had a more fortunate destiny than Count Larinski. She did not plume herself on having invented a new gun, nor did she depend upon her ingenuity for a livelihood; she had inherited from her mother a yearly income of about a hundred thousand livres, which enabled her to enjoy life and make others happy, for she was very charitable. She loved the world without

loving it too much; she knew how to do without it, having abundant resources within herself, and being of a very independent disposition. During the winter she went out a great deal into society, and received freely at home. Her father, member of the Institute and Professor of Chemistry at the College of France, was one of those *savants* who enjoy dining out; he had a taste also for music and for the theatre. Antoinette accompanied him everywhere; they scarcely ever remained at home except upon their reception evenings; but with the return of the swallows it was a pleasure to Mlle. Moriaz to fly to Cormeilles and there pass seven months, reduced to the society of Mlle. Moiseney, who, after having been her instructress, had become her *demoiselle de compagnie.* She lived pretty much in the open air, walking about in the woods, reading, or painting; and the woods, her books, and her paint-brushes, to say nothing of her poor people, so agreeably occupied her time that she never experienced a quarter of an hour's *ennui.* She was too content with her lot to have the slightest inclination to change it; therefore she was in no hurry to marry. She had completed twenty-four years of her existence, had refused several desirable offers, and wished nothing better than to retain her maidenhood. It was the sole

article concerning which this heiress had discussions with those around her. When her father took it into his head to grow angry and cry, "You must!" she would burst out laughing; whereupon he would laugh also, and say: "I'm not the master here; in fact, I am placed in the position of a ploughman arguing with a priest."

It is very dangerous to tax one's brains too much when one dines out frequently. During the winter of 1875, M. Moriaz had undertaken an excess of work; he was overdriven, and his health suffered. He was attacked by one of those anæmic disorders of which we hear so much nowadays, and which may be called *la maladie à la mode.* He was obliged to break in upon his daily routine, employ an assistant, and early in July his physician ordered him to set out for Engadine, and try the chalybeate water-cure at Saint Moritz. The trip from Paris to Saint Moritz cannot be made without passing through Chur. It was at Chur that Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz, who accompanied her father, met for the first time Count Abel Larinski. When the decree of Destiny goes forth, the spider and the fly must inevitably meet.

Abel Larinski had arrived at Chur from Vienna, having taken the route through Milan and across the Splügen Pass. Although he was very

short of funds, upon reaching the capital of the canton of Grisons he had put up at the Hôtel Steinbock, the best and most expensive in the place. It was his opinion that he owed this mark of respect to Count Larinski; such duties he held to be very sacred, and he fulfilled them religiously. He was in a very melancholy mood, and set out for a promenade in order to divert his mind. In crossing the Plessur Bridge, he fixed his troubled eyes on the muddy waters of the stream, and he felt almost tempted to take the fatal leap; but in such a project there is a considerable distance between the dream and its fulfilment, and Count Larinski experienced at this juncture that the most melancholy man in the world may find it difficult to conquer his passion for living.

He had no reason to feel very cheerful. He had quitted Vienna in order to betake himself to the Saxon Casino, where *roulette* and *trente-et-quarante* are played. His ill-luck would have it that he stopped on the way at Milan, and fell in with a circle of ill repute, where this most imprudent of men played and lost. There remained to him just enough cash to carry him to Saxon; but what can be accomplished in a casino when one has empty pockets? Before crossing the Splügen he had written to a petty Jew banker of his ac-

quaintance for money. He counted but little on the compliance of this Hebrew, and this was why he paused five minutes to contemplate the Plessur, after which he retraced his steps. Twenty minutes later he was crossing a public square, ornamented with a pretty Gothic fountain, and seeing before him a cathedral, he hastened to enter it.

The cathedral of Chur possesses, among other curiosities, a painting by Albert Dürer, a St. Lawrence on the gridiron, attributed to Holbein, a piece of the true cross, and some relics of St. Lucius and his sister Ernesta. Count Abel only accorded a wandering attention to either St. Lucius or St. Lawrence. Scarcely had he made his way into the nave of the building, when he beheld something that appeared to him far more interesting than paintings or relics. An English poet has said that at times there is revealed to us a glimpse of paradise in a woman's face, and it was such a rare blessing that was at this moment vouchsafed unto Count Larinski. He was not a romantic man, and yet he remained for some moments motionless, rooted to the spot in admiration. Was it a premonition of his destiny? The fact is that, in beholding for the first time Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz, for it was none other than she who thus riveted his attention, he experienced an inexpli-

cable surprise, a thrilling of the heart, such as he never before had experienced. In his first impression of this charming girl he made one slight mistake. He divined at once that the man by whom she was accompanied, who had gray hair, a broad, open brow, vivacious eyes, shaded by beautiful, heavy eye-brows, belonged to some learned fraternity ; but he imagined that this individual with a white cravat, who had evidently preserved his freshness of heart, although past sixty years of age, was the fortunate suitor of the beautiful girl by his side.

There are some women whom it is impossible not to gaze upon. Wherever Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz appeared she was the object of universal observation : first, because she was charming ; and, then, because she had a way of her own of dressing and of arranging her hair, a peculiar movement of the head, a grace of carriage, which inevitably must attract notice. There were those who made so bold as to assert that she assumed certain little peculiarities solely for the purpose of attracting the chance observer. Do not believe a word of it. She was altogether indifferent to public opinion and consulted her own taste alone, which was certainly impregnated with a touch of audacity ; but she did not seek to appear audacious—she merely

acted according to her natural bent. Observing her from a distance, people were apt to fancy her affected, and somewhat inclined to be fantastic; but on approaching her, their minds were speedily disabused of this fancy. The purity of her countenance, her air of refinement and thorough modesty, speedily dispelled any suspicious thoughts, and those who had for a moment harboured them would say mentally, "Pardon me, mademoiselle, I mistook." Such, at least, was the mental comment of Count Abel, as she passed close by him on leaving the church. Her father was telling her something that made her smile; this smile was that of a young girl just budding into womanhood, who has nothing yet to conceal from her guardian angel. Count Larinski left the church after her, and followed her with his eyes as she crossed the square. On returning to the hotel he had a curiosity to satisfy. He questioned one of the *garçons*, who pointed out to him in the hotel register for travellers the following entry: "M. Moriaz, member of the Institute of France, and his daughter, from Paris, *en route* for Saint Moritz." "And where then?" he asked himself; then dismissed the subject from his mind.

When he had dined, he repaired to the post-office to inquire for a letter he was expecting from

Vienna. He found it, and returned to shut himself up in his chamber, where he tore open the envelope with a feverish hand. This letter, written in a more peculiar than felicitous French, was the reply of the Jew banker. It read as follows:

"M. LE COMTE:

"Although you both write and understand German very well, you do not like to read it, and therefore I write to you in French. It grieves me deeply not to have it in my power to satisfy your honoured demand. Business is very dull. It is impossible for me to advance you another florin, or even to renew your note, which falls due shortly. I am the father of a family; it pains me to be compelled to remind you of this.

"I wish to tell you quite freely what I think. I did believe in your gun, but I believe in it no longer, no one believes in it any more. When strong, it was too heavy; when you made it lighter, it was no longer strong. What came next? You know it burst. Beware how you further perfect it, or it will explode whenever it becomes aware that any one is looking at it. This accursed gun has eaten up the little you had, and some of my savings besides, although I have confidence that you will, at least, pay me the interest

due on that. It grieves me to tell you so, M. le Comte, but all inventors are more or less crack-brained, and end in the hospital. For the love of God, leave guns as they are, and invent nothing more, or you will go overboard, and there will be no one to fish you out."

Abel Larinski paused at this place. He put his letter down on the table, and, turning round in his arm-chair, with a savage air, his eye fixed on a distant corner of the room, he fell to thus soliloquizing in a sepulchral voice:

"Do you hear, idiot? This old knave is right Accursed be the day when the genius of invention thrilled your sublime brain! A grand discovery you have made, forsooth! What have I gained from it? Grand illusions, grand discomfitures! What hath it availed me that I passed whole nights discussing with you breech-loaders, screw-plates, tumbrels, sockets, bridges, ovoid balls, and spring-locks? What fruits have I gained from these refreshing conversations? You foresaw everything, my great man, except that one little thing which great men so often fail to see, that mysterious something, I know not what, which makes success. When you spoke to me, in your slow, monotonous tones, when you fixed upon me

your melancholy gaze, I should have been able to read in your eyes that you were only a fool. The devil take thee and thy gun, thy gun and thee; hollow head, head full of chimeras, true Pole, true Larinski!"

To whom was Count Abel speaking? To a phantom? To his double? He alone knew. When he had uttered the last words, he resumed the perusal of his letter, which ended thus:

"Will you permit me to give you a piece of advice, M. le Comte, a good little piece of advice? I have known you for three years, and have taken much interest in your welfare. You invent guns, which, when they are strong, lack lightness. I beg your pardon, but I do not comprehend you, M. le Comte. The name you bear is excellent; the head you carry on your shoulders is superb, and it is the general opinion that you resemble *Faust*; but neither name nor head does you any good. Leave guns as they are, and bestow your attention upon women; they, and they alone, can draw you out of the deep waters where you are now floundering. There is no time to lose. I beg your pardon, but you must be thirty years old, and perhaps a little more. This *diable* of a gun has made you lose three valuable years.

"It pains me, M. le Comte, to be compelled to remind you that the little note falls due shortly. I have had the value of the bracelet you left with me as a pledge estimated; it is not worth a thousand florins, as you believed; it is a piece of antiquity that has a value to only those who can indulge in a caprice for fancy articles, and such caprices are rare nowadays, the time for such is past.

"I am, M. le Comte, with much respect, your humble and obedient servant,

"MOSES GULDENTHAL."

Abel Larinski turned once more in his chair. He crumpled up between his fingers the letter of M. Moses Guldenthal, saying to himself as he did so, that the Guldenthals are often very clear-sighted folks. "Ay, to be sure," thought he, "this Hebrew is right, I have lost three valuable years. I have had fever, and my eyes have been clouded; but, Heaven be praised! the charm is broken, the illusion fled, I am cured—saved! Farewell, my chimera, I am no longer thy dupe! Many thanks, my dear friend: I return to you your gun; do with it as it seemeth best to you."

His eyes suddenly fell on his own reflection in

the mirror above the chimney-piece, and he regarded it fixedly for a few moments.

"The semblance truly of an inventor," he resumed, mournfully smiling. "This pale, emaciated face; these deep-set eyes, with dark circles about them; these hollow, cadaverous cheeks! The three years have indeed left their traces. Bah! a little rest in the Alpine pastures, and *Faust* will become rejuvenated."

He seized a pen, and wrote the following reply:

"You are truly kind, my dear Guldenthal: you refuse me the miserable florins, but you give me in their stead a little piece of advice that is worth a fortune. Unluckily, I am not capable of following it. Noble souls like ours comprehend each other with half a word, and you are a poet whenever it suits you. When in the course of the day you have transacted a neat little piece of business, after having rubbed your hands until you have almost deprived them of skin, you tune your violin, which you play like an angel, and you draw from it such delightful strains that your ledger and your cash-box fall to weeping with emotion. I, too, am a musician, and my music is the fair sex. But, alas! women never can be for me other than an adorable inutility a part of the

dream of my life. Your dreams yield you a handsome percentage, as I have sorrowfully experienced; my dreams yield me nothing, and therefore it is that they are dear to me.

"I must prohibit—understand me clearly—your disposing of the trinket I left with you; we have the weakness, we Poles, of clinging to our family relics. Set your mind at rest; before the end of the month I shall have returned to Vienna, and will honour the dear little note. One day you will go down on your knees to beg of me to loan you a thousand florins, and I will astonish you with my ingratitude. May the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, have you in his holy keeping, my dear Guldenthal!"

As he finished his letter, he heard the sound of harps and violins. Some itinerant musicians were giving a concert in the hotel-garden, which was lit up as bright as day. Abel opened his window, and leaned on his elbows, looking out. The first object that presented itself to his eyes was Mlle. Moriaz, promenading one of the long garden-walks, leaning on her father's arm. Many eyes were fixed on her—we have already said it was difficult not to gaze upon her—but no one contemplated her with such close attention as

Count Larinski. He never once lost sight of her.

"Is she beautiful? Is she even pretty?" he queried within himself. "I cannot quite make up my mind, but I am very sure that she is charming. Like my bracelet, this is a fancy article. She is a little thin, and her shoulders are too vigorously fashioned for her waist, which is slender and supple as a reed; but, such as she is, she has not her equal. Her walk, her carriage, resemble nothing I ever have seen before. I can well imagine that when she appears in the streets of Paris people turn to look after her, but no one would have the audacity to follow her. How old is she? Twenty-four or twenty-five years, I should say. Why is she not married? Who is this withered, pinched-looking fright of a personage who trots at her side like a poodle-dog? Probably some *demoiselle de compagnie*. And there comes her *femme de chambre*, a very spruce little lass, bringing her a shawl, which the *demoiselle de compagnie* hastens to put over her shoulders. She allows it to be done with the air of one who is accustomed to being waited upon. Mlle. Moriaz is an heiress. Why, then, is she not married?"

Count Larinski pursued his soliloquy as long as Mlle. Moriaz promenaded in the garden. As

soon as she re-entered the hotel, it appeared to him that the garden had become empty, and that the musicians were playing out of tune. He closed his window. He gave up his plan of starting the next day for Saxon. He had decided that he would set out for Saint Moritz, to pass there at least two or three days. He said to himself, "It seems absurd; but who can tell?"

Thereupon he proceeded to investigate the state of his finances, and he weighed and reweighed his purse, which was very light. Formerly Count Larinski had possessed a very pretty collection of jewellery. He had looked upon this as a reserve fund, to which he would have recourse only in cases of extreme distress. Alas! there remained to him now only two articles of his once considerable store—the bracelet that was in the hands of M. Guldenthal, and a diamond ring that he wore on his finger. He decided that, before quitting Chur, he would borrow money on this ring, or that he would try to sell it.

He remained some time seated at the foot of his bed, dangling his legs to and fro, his eyes closed. He had closed them, in order to better call up a vision of Mlle. Moriaz, and he repeated the words: "It seems absurd; but who can tell? The fact is, we can know nothing of a surety, and

anything may happen." Then he recalled one of Goethe's poems, entitled "Vanitas! vanitatum vanitas!" and he recited several times in German these two lines:

"Nun hab' ich mein' Sach' auf nichts gestellt,
Und mein gehört die ganze Welt!"

This literally signifies, "Now that I no longer count on anything, the whole world is mine." Abel Larinski recited these lines with a purity of accent that would have astonished M. Moses Guldenthal.

M. Moriaz, after wishing his daughter good-night, and imprinting a kiss upon her brow, as was his custom, had retired to his chamber. He was preparing for bed, when there came a knock at his door. Opening this, he saw before him a fair-haired youth, who rushed eagerly towards him, seized both his hands, and pressed them with effusion. M. Moriaz disengaged his hands, and regarded the intruder with a bewildered air.

"How?" cried the latter. "You do not know me? So sure as you are one of the most illustrious chemists of the day, I am Camille Langis, son of your best friend, a young man of great expectations, who admires you truly, who has followed you here, and who is now ready to begin

all over again. There, my dear master, do you recognise me?"

"Ay, to be sure I recognise you, my boy," replied M. Moriaz, "although, to tell the truth, you have greatly changed. When you left us you were a mere youth."

"And now?"

"And now you have the air of a young man; but, I beg of you, where have you come from? I thought you were in the heart of Transylvania."

"It is possible to return from there, as you see. Three days ago I arrived in Paris and flew to Maisons-Lafitte. Mme. de Lorcy, who bears the double insignia of honour of being my aunt and the godmother of Antoinette—I beg your pardon, I mean Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz—informed me that you were in ill-health, and that your physician had sent you to Switzerland, to Saint Moritz, to recruit. I hastened after you; this morning I missed you by one hour at Zürich; but I have you now, and you will listen to me."

"I warn you, my dear child, that I am at this moment a most detestable auditor. We have done to-day one *hôtel de ville*, one episcopal palace, one cathedral, and some relics of St. Lucius. To speak plainly, I am overpowered with sleep. Is

there any great haste for what you have to say to me?"

"Is there any great haste? Why, I arrive breathless from Hungary to demand your daughter in marriage."

M. Moriaz threw up his arms; then, seating himself on the edge of his bed, he piteously gasped:

"You could not wait until to-morrow? If a judge is desired to take a favourable view of a case, he surely should not be disturbed in his first sleep to consider it."

"My dear master, I am truly distressed to be compelled to be disagreeable to you, but it is absolutely necessary that you should listen to me. Two years ago, for the first time, I asked of you your daughter's hand. After having consulted Antoinette—you will permit me to call her Antoinette, will you not?—after having consulted her, you told me that I was too young, that she would not listen seriously to my proposal, and you gave me your permission to try again in two years. I have employed these two mortal years in constructing a railroad and a wire bridge in Hungary, and, believe me, I took infinite pains to forget Antoinette. In vain! She is the romance of my youth, I never can have another. On July 5,

1873, did you not tell me to return in two years? We are now at July 5, 1875, and I return. Am I a punctual man?"

"As punctual as insupportable," rejoined M. Moriaz, casting a melancholy look at his pillow. "Now, candidly, is it the thing to seek the presence of the President of the Academy of Sciences between eleven o'clock and midnight, to pour such silly stuff into his ear? You are wanting in respect for the Institute. Besides, my dear boy, people change in two years; you are a proof of it. You have developed from boyhood almost into manhood, and you have done well to let your imperial grow; it gives you quite a dashing military air—one would divine at first sight that you were fresh from Hungary. But, while you have changed for the better, are you sure that Antoinette has not changed for the worse? Are you sure that she is still the Antoinette of your romance?"

"I beg your pardon; I saw her just now, without her seeing me. She was promenading on your arm in the hotel-garden, which was lit up in her honour. Formerly she was enchanting, she has become adorable. If you would have the immense goodness to give her to me, I would be capable of doing anything to be agreeable to you. I would relieve you of all your little troublesome jobs; I

would clean your retorts; I would put labels on your bottles and jars; I would sweep out your laboratory. I know German very well—I would read all the large German books it might please you to consult; I would read them, pen in hand; I would make extracts—written extracts—and such extracts! *Grand Dieu!* they would be like copperplate. My dear master, will you give her to me?"

"The absurd creature! He imagines that it only depends upon me to give him my daughter. I could as easily dispose of the moon. Since she has had teeth, she has made me desire everything she desires."

"At least you will give me permission to pay my addresses to her to-morrow?"

"Beware, unlucky youth!" cried M. Moriaz. "You will ruin your case forever. Since you have been away she has refused two offers, one of them from a second secretary of legation, Viscount de R——, and at the present moment she holds in holy horror all suitors. She is accompanying me to Saint Moritz in order to gather flowers and paint aquarelle sketches of them. Should you presume to interrupt her in her favourite occupations, should you present yourself before her like a creditor on the day of maturity, I swear to you that your note

would be protested, and that you would have nothing better to do than return to Hungary."

"You are sure of it?"

"As sure as that sulphuric acid will turn litmus red."

"And you have the heart to send me back to Paris without having spoken with her?"

"What I have said is for your good, and you know whether I mean you well or not."

"It is agreed, then, that you will take charge of my interests; that you will plead my cause?"

"It is understood that I will sound the premises, that I will prepare the way——"

"And that you will send me tidings shortly, and that these tidings will be good. I shall await them here, at the Hôtel Steinbock."

"As you please; but, for the love of Heaven, let me sleep!"

M. Camille Langis pressed his two arms and said, with much emotion: "I place myself in your hands; take care how you answer for my life!"

"O youth!" murmured M. Moriaz, actually thrusting Camille from the room. "One might search in vain for a more beautiful invention."

Ten hours later, a post-chaise bore in the direction of Engadine Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz, her father, her *demoiselle de compagnie*, and her *femme*

de chambre. They breakfasted tolerably well in a village situated in the lower portion of a notch, called Tiefenkasten, which means, literally, *deep chest*, and certainly a deeper never has been seen. After breakfast they pursued their way farther, and towards four o'clock in the afternoon they reached the entrance of the savage defile of Bergünerstein, which deserves to be compared with that of Via Mala. The road lies between a wall of rocks and a precipice of nearly two hundred metres, at the bottom of which rush the swift waters of the Albula. This wild scenery deeply moved Mlle. Moriaz; she never had seen anything like it at Cormeilles or anywhere about Paris. She alighted, and, moving towards the parapet, leaned over it, contemplating at her ease the depths below, which the foaming torrent beneath filled with its roars.

Her father speedily joined her.

"Do you not find this music charming?" she asked of him.

"Charming, I grant," he replied; "but more charming still are those brave workmen who, at the risk of their necks, have engineered such a suspended highway as we see here. I think you admire the torrent too much, and the road not enough." And after a pause he added, "I wish

that our friend Camille Langis had had fewer dangers to contend with in constructing his." Antoinette turned quickly and looked at her father; then she bestowed her attention once more upon the Albula. "To be sure," resumed M. Moriaz, stroking his whiskers with the head of his cane, "Camille is just the man to make his way through difficulties. He has a youthful air that is very deceptive, but he always has been astonishingly precocious. At twenty years of age he became head of his class at the Central School; but the best thing about him is that, although in possession of a fortune, yet he has a passion for work. The rich man who works accepts voluntary poverty."

There arose from the precipice a damp, chill breeze; Mlle. Moriaz drew over her head a red hood that she held in her hand, and scraping off with her finger some of the facing of the parapet, which glittered with scales of mica, she asked: "What do you call this?"

"It is gneiss, a sort of sheet-granite; but do not you too admire people who work when they are not compelled to do anything?"

"Then you must admire yourself a great deal."

"Oh, I! In my early youth I worked from

necessity, and then I formed a habit which I cannot now get rid of; while Camille Langis——"

"Once more?" she ejaculated, with a gesture of impatience. "What prompts you to speak to me of Camille?"

"Nothing. I often think of him."

"Do not let us two play at diplomacy. You have had news of him lately?"

"You just remind me that I have, through a letter from Mme. de Lorcy."

"Mme. de Lorcy, my godmother, would do better to meddle with what concerns her. That woman is incorrigible."

"Of what would you have her correct herself?"

"Simply of her mania for making my happiness after her own fashion. I read in your eyes that Camille has returned to Paris. What is his object?"

"I know nothing about it. How should I know? I only presume—that is, I suppose——"

"You do not suppose—you know."

"Not at all. At the same time, since hypothesis is the road which leads to science, a road we *savants* travel every day, I——"

"You know very well," she again interposed, "that I promised him nothing."

"Strictly speaking, I admit; but you requested

me to tell him that you found him too young. He has laboured conscientiously since then to correct that fault." Then playfully pinching her cheeks, he added: "You are a great girl for objections. Soon you will be twenty-five years old, and you have refused five eligible offers. Have you taken a vow to remain unmarried?"

"Ah! you have no mercy," she cried. "What! you cannot even spare me on the Albula! You know that, of all subjects of conversation, I have most antipathy for this."

"Come, come; you are slandering me now, my child. I spoke to you of Camille as I might have spoken of the King of Prussia; and you rose in arms at once, taking it wholly to yourself."

Antoinette was silent for some moments.

"Decidedly, you are very fond of Camille," she presently said.

"Of all the sons-in-law you could propose to me——"

"But I do not propose any."

"That is precisely what I find fault with."

"Very good; since you think so much of him, this Camille, suppose you command me to marry him?"

"If I were to command, would you obey?"

"Perhaps, just for the curiosity of the thing," she rejoined, laughing.

"Naughty girl, to mock at her father!" said he. "If these twenty years I have been in servitude, I can scarcely emancipate myself in a day. However, since the great king deigns to hold parley with his ministers, I am Pomponne—let us argue."

"Ah, well! you know as well as I that I have a real friendship for Camille, as the playmate of my childhood. I remember him when he was ever so small, and he remembers me, too, when I was a tiny creature. We played hide-and-seek together, and he humoured me in my ten thousand little caprices. Delightful reminiscences these, but unfortunately I think of them too much when I see him."

"He has passed two years among the Magyars; two years is a good while."

"Bah! he could never possibly have any authority over me. I intend that my husband shall be my government."

"So that you may have the pleasure of governing your government?"

"Besides, I know Camille too well. I could only fall in love with a stranger," said she, heedless of the last sally.

"Was not the Viscount R—— a stranger?"

"At the end of five minutes I knew him by heart. He is precisely like all other second secretaries of legation in the world. You may be sure that there is not a single idea in his head that is really his own. Even his figure does not belong to himself; it is the *chef-d'œuvre* of the united efforts of his tailor and his shirt-maker."

"According to this, a prime requisite in the man whom you could love is to be poorly clad."

"If ever my heart is touched, it will be because I have met a man who is not like all the other men of my acquaintance. After that I will not positively forbid him to have decent clothing."

M. Moriaz made a little gesture of impatience, and then set out to regain the chaise, which was some distance in advance. When he had proceeded about twenty steps, he paused, and, turning towards Antoinette, who was engaged in readjusting her hood and rebuttoning her twelve-button gloves, he said:

"I have drawn an odd number in the great lottery of this world. In our day there are no romantic girls; the last remaining one is mine."

"That is it; I am a romantic girl!" she cried, tossing her pretty, curly head with an air of defiance; "and if you are wise you will not urge me

to marry, for I never shall make any but an ineligible match."

"Ah, speak lower!" he exclaimed, casting a hurried glance around him, and adding: "Thank Heaven! there is no one here but the Albula to hear you."

M. Moriaz mistook. Had he raised his eyes a little higher he would have discovered, above the rocky cornice bordering the highway, a foot-path, and in this foot-path a pedestrian tourist, who had paused beneath a fir-tree. This tourist had set out from Chur in the diligence. At the entrance of the defile, leaving his baggage to continue without him to Saint Moritz, he had alighted, and with his haversack on his back had set forward on foot for Bergün, where he proposed passing the night, as did also M. Moriaz. Of the conversation between Antoinette and her father he had caught only one word. This word, however, sped like an arrow into his ear, and from his ear into the innermost recesses of his brain, where it long quivered. It was a treasure, this word; and he did not cease to meditate upon it, to comment on it, to extract from it all its essence, until he had reached the first houses of Bergün, like a mendicant who has picked up in a dusty road a well-filled purse, and who opens it, closes it, opens it

again, counts his prize piece by piece, and adds up its value twenty times over. Our tourist dined at the *table d'hôte;* he was so preoccupied that he ate the trout caught in the Albula without suspecting that they possessed a marvellous freshness, an exquisite flavour and delicacy, and yet it is notorious that the trout of the Albula are the first trout of the universe.

Mlle. Moiseney, the duties of whose office consisted in serving as chaperon to Mlle. Moriaz, was not a great genius. This worthy and excellent personage had, in fact, rather a circumscribed mind, and she had not the least suspicion of it. Her physiognomy was not pleasing to M. Moriaz; he had several times besought his daughter to part with her. In the goodness of her soul Antoinette always refused; she was not one who could countenance rebuffs to old domestics, old dogs, old horses, or worn-out governesses. Young Candide arrived at the conclusion, as the result of his observations, that the first degree of happiness would be to be Mlle. Gunégonde, and the second to contemplate her throughout life. Mlle. Moiseney believed that it would be the first degree of superhuman felicity to be Mlle. Moriaz, the second to pass one's life near this queen, who, arbitrary and capricious though she might be, was most thought-

ful of the happiness of her subjects, and to be able to say: "It was I that hatched the egg whence arose this phœnix; I did something for this marvel; I taught her English and music." She had boundless admiration for her queen, amounting actually to idolatry. The English profess that their sovereigns can do nothing amiss: "The king can do no wrong." Mlle. Moiseney was convinced that Mlle. Moriaz could neither do wrong nor make mistakes about anything. She saw everything with her eyes, espoused her likes and her dislikes, her sentiments, her opinions, her rights, and her wrongs; she lived, as it were, a reflected existence. Every morning she said to her idol, "How beautiful we are to-day!" precisely as the bell-ringer who, puffing out his cheeks, cried: "We are in voice; we have chanted vespers well to-day!" M. Moriaz excused her for finding his daughter charming, but could not so readily approve of her upholding Antoinette's ideas, her decisions, her prejudices. "This woman is no chaperon," said he; "she is an admiration-point!" He would have been very glad to have routed her from the field, and to give her place to a person of good sound sense and judgment, one who might gain some influence over Antoinette. It would have greatly surprised Mlle. Moiseney had

he represented to her that she lacked good sense. This good creature flattered herself that she had an inexhaustible stock of this commodity; she placed the highest estimate on her own judgment; she believed herself to be well-nigh infallible. She discoursed in the tone of an oracle on future contingencies; she prided herself on being able to divine all things, to foresee all things, to predict all things—in a word, to be in the secret of the gods. As her Christian name was Joan, M. Moriaz, who set little store by his calendar, sometimes called her Pope Joan, which wounded her deeply.

Mlle. Moiseney had two weaknesses; she was a gormand, and she admired handsome men. Let us understand the case: she knew perfectly well that they were not created for her; that she had no attractions to offer them; that they had nothing to give her. She admired them naïvely and innocently, as a child might admire a beautiful Epinal engraving; she would willingly have cut out their likenesses to hang on a nail on her wall, and contemplate while rereading "Gonzalve de Cordue" and "Le Dernier des Cavaliers," her two favourite romances. At Bergün, during the repast, her brain had been working, and she had made two reflections. The first was, that the

trout of the Albula were incomparable, the second that the stranger seated opposite her had a remarkably handsome head, and was altogether a fine-looking man. Several times, with fork halfway to mouth, and nose in the air, she had forgotten herself in her scrutiny of him.

Antoinette, rather weary, had retired early to her chamber. Mlle. Moiseney repaired thither to see if she needed anything, and, as she was about leaving her for the night, candle in hand, she suddenly inquired, "Do not you think, as I do, that this stranger is a remarkable-looking person?"

"Of whom do you speak?" rejoined Antoinette.

"Why, of the traveller who sat opposite me."

"I confess that I scarcely looked at him."

"Indeed! He has superb eyes, nearly green, with fawn-coloured tinting."

"Most astonishing! And his hair, is it green also?"

"Chestnut brown, almost hazel."

"Pray be more exact; is it hazel or not?"

"You need not laugh at me—his whole appearance is striking, his figure singular, but full of character, full of expression, and as handsome as singular."

"What enthusiasm! It seemed to me, so far

as I noticed, that he was inclined to stoop, and that his head was very badly poised."

"What do you say?" cried Mlle. Moiseney, greatly scandalized. "How came you to think his head badly poised?"

"There—there! don't let us quarrel about it; I am ready to retract. Good-night, mademoiselle. Apropos, did you know that M. Camille Langis had returned to Paris?"

"I did not know it, but I am not surprised. I had surmised it; in fact, I was quite sure that he would be back about this time, perfectly sure. And, of course, you think he has returned with the intention——"

"I think," interrupted Antoinette, "that it costs me more to pain M. Langis than any other man in the world. I think, also, that he possesses most tiresome fidelity; it is always the way, one never loses one's dog when one wants to lose him; and I think, moreover, that a woman makes a poor bargain when she marries a man for whom she feels friendship; for, if she gains a husband, she is very sure to lose a friend."

"How true your words are!" exclaimed Mlle. Moiseney. "But you are always right. Has M. Langis forgotten that you thought him too young —only twenty-three?"

"He has so little forgotten it that he has managed, I don't know how, to be at present twenty-five. How resist such a mark of affection? I shall be compelled to marry him."

"That will never do. People do not marry for charity," replied Mlle. Moiseney, deprecatingly.

"Adieu, my dear," said Antoinette, dismissing her. "Do not dream too much about your unknown charmer. I assure you he has a decided stoop in his shoulders. However, that makes small difference; if your heart speaks, I will see to arranging this affair for you." And she added, musingly, "How amusing it must be to marry other people!"

The next morning Mlle. Moiseney made the acquaintance of her unknown charmer. Before leaving Bergün Mlle. Moriaz wished to make a sketch, and she had gone out early with her father. Mlle. Moiseney descended to the hotel *salon*, and, espying a piano, she opened it and played a *fantasia* by Schumann; she was a tolerably good musician. When she had finished, Count Abel Larinski, the man with green eyes, who had entered the *salon* without her hearing him, approached to thank her for the pleasure he had had in listening to her; but he begged to take the liberty to tell

her that she failed to properly observe the movement, and had taken an *andantino* for an *andante.* At her solicitation he took her place at the instrument, and executed the *andantino* as few but professional artists could do. Mlle. Moiseney, ever ready with her enthusiasm, declared that he must be a Liszt or a Chopin, and implored him to play her something else, to which he consented with good grace. After this they talked about music and many other things. The man with the green eyes possessed one quality in common with Socrates, he was master in the art of interrogating, and Mlle. Moiseney loved to talk. The subject on which she discoursed most willingly was Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz; when she was started under this heading she became eloquent. At the end of half an hour Count Abel was thoroughly *au fait* on the character and position of Mlle. Moriaz. He knew that she had a heart of gold, a mind free from all narrow prejudices, a generous soul, and a love for all that was chivalrous and heroic; he knew that two days of every week were devoted by her to visiting the poor, and that she looked upon these as natural creditors to whom it was her duty to make restitution. He knew also that Mlle. Moriaz could all the better satisfy her charitable inclinations, as her mother had left her

an income of one hundred thousand livres. He learned that she danced to perfection, that she drew like an angel, and that she read Italian and spoke English. This last seemed of mediocre importance to Count Abel. St. Paul said: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." The count was of St. Paul's opinion, and had Mlle. Moriaz known neither how to speak English, nor to draw, nor yet to dance, it would not in the least have diminished the esteem with which he honoured her. The main essential in his eyes was that she was benevolent to the poor, and that she cherished a little tenderness for heroes.

When he had learned, with an air of indifference, all that he cared to learn, he respectfully bowed himself away from Mlle. Moiseney, to whom he had not mentioned his name, and, buckling his haversack, he put it on his back, paid his bill, and set out on foot to make a hasty ascent of the culminating point of the Albula Pass, which leads into the Engadine Valley. One would have difficulty in finding throughout the Alps a more completely barren, rugged, desolate spot, than this portion of the Albula Pass. The highway lies among masses of rocks, heaped up in terrible dis-

order. Arrived at the culminating point, Count Abel felt the necessity of taking breath. He clambered up a little hillock, where he seated himself. At his feet were wide open the yawning jaws of a cavern, obstructed by great tufts of aconite (wolf's-bane), with sombre foliage; one would have said that they kept guard over some crime in which they had been accomplices. Count Abel contemplated the awful silence that surrounded him; everywhere enormous boulders, heaped together, or scattered about in isolated grandeur; some pitched on their sides, others standing erect, still others suspended, as it were, in mid-air. It seemed to him that these boulders had formerly served for the games of bacchanalian Titans, who, after having used them as skittles or jack-stones, had ended by hurling them at one another's heads. It is most probable that He who constructed the Albula Pass, alarmed and confused by the hideous aspect of his work, did justice to it by breaking it into fragments with his gigantic hammer.

Count Abel heard a tinkling of bells, and, looking up, he saw approaching a post-chaise, making its way from Engadine to Bergün. It was a large, uncovered berlin, and in it sat a woman of about sixty years of age, accompanied

by her attendants and her pug-dog. This woman had rather a bulky head, a long face, a snub-nose, high cheek-bones, a keen, bright eye, a large mouth, about which played a smile, at the same time *spirituel*, imperious, and contemptuous. Abel grew pale, and became at once convulsed with terror; he could not withdraw his eyes from this markedly Mongolian physiognomy, which from afar he had recognised. "Ah, yes," he said, "it is she!" He drew over his face the cape of his mantle, and disappeared as completely as it is possible to disappear when one is perched upon a hillock. It was six years since he had seen this woman, and he had promised himself never to see her again; but man is the plaything of circumstances, and his happiness as well as his pride is at the mercy of a chance encounter. Count Abel was no longer proud; for some moments he had humbled himself, he had ceased to exist.

Happily he discovered that he had not been recognised; that the woman of sixty years of age was not looking his way. She had good taste; discovering the hideous aspect of the country, which is usually known as the Vallée du Diable, she had opened a volume, bound in morocco, which her waiting-woman had placed in her hands. This volume was not a new novel; it was a Ger-

man book, entitled "The History of Civilization, viewed in Accordance with the Doctrines of Evolution, from the most Remote Period to the Present Day." She neither had made much progress in the pages of the book nor in the history of civilization; she had not got beyond the age of stone or of bronze; she was still among primitive animal life, among the protozoa, the monads, the infusoria, the vibratiles—in the age of albumen, or gelatinous civilization, as it was called by the author, the sagacity of whose views charmed her. She only interrupted her reading at intervals to lightly stroke the nose of her pug, who lay snoring in her lap, and she was á thousand leagues from suspecting that Count Abel Larinski was at hand, watching her.

The berlin passed by him without stopping, and soon it had begun the descent towards Bergün. Then he felt a great weight roll from his heart, which beat freely once more. The berlin moved rapidly away; the count followed it with his prayers, smoothing its course, removing every stone or other obstacle that might retard its progress. It was just disappearing round one of the curves of the road, when it crossed another post-chaise, making the ascent in a walk, and in it Count Abel perceived something red: it was the

hood of Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz. A moment more and the berlin was gone ; it seemed to him that the shadow of his sorrowful youth, emerged suddenly from the realm of shades, had been plunged back there forever, and that the fay of hope—she who holds in her keeping the secrets of the future—was ascending toward him, red-hooded, flowers in her hands, sunshine in her eyes. The clouds parted, the deep shadow covering the Vallée du Diable cleared away, and the dismal solitude began to smile. Count Abel arose, picked up his staff, and shook himself. As he passed before the cavern, he discovered, among the tufts of aconite which covered it, a mossy hollow, and he perceived that this hollow was ornamented with beautiful blue campanulas, whose little bells gracefully waved in the gentle breeze which was stirring. He gathered one of these campanulas, carried it to his lips, and found its taste most agreeable. Half an hour later he turned from the highway into a foot-path which led through green pastures and forests of larch-trees.

By the time he had reached the heart of the valley it was nightfall. He traversed the hamlet of Cresta, crossed a bridge, and found himself at the entrance of the village of Cellarina, about twenty-five minutes' walk from Saint Moritz.

After taking counsel with himself, he resolved to proceed no farther; and so he put up at a neat, pretty inn, which had just been freshly white-washed.

The air of the Engadine is so keen and bracing that the first nights passed there are apt to be sleepless ones. Count Larinski scarcely slept at all in his new quarters. Would he have slept better on the plains? He became worn out with his thoughts. Of what was he thinking? Of the cathedral at Chur, of the Vallée du Diable, of the tufts of aconite, the campanulas, and the meeting of the two post-chaises, one ascending, the other descending. After that he saw no longer anything but a red hood, and his eyes were open when the first blush of the morning penetrated his modest chamber. Eagles sleep little when they are preparing for the chase.

CHAPTER II

THE Baths of Saint Moritz are, according to the verdict of a large number of people, by no means an enlivening resort, and here tarry chiefly genuine invalids, who cherish a sincere desire to recover health and strength. The invigorating atmosphere, the chalybeate waters, which are unquestionably wholesome, although they do taste like ink, have wrought more than one actual miracle ; nevertheless, it is said to require no little philosophy to tolerate existence there. "I am charmed to have had the experience of visiting the Baths," we once heard an invalid say, "for I know now that I am capable of enduring anything and everything." But this, let us hasten to assure the reader, is an exaggeration—the mere babbling of an ingrate.

The Upper Engadine Valley, in which Saint Moritz is situated, has, as well as the Baths, its detractors and its admirers. This narrow valley, throughout whose whole length flows the Inn, shut in by glacier-capped mountains, whose slopes

are covered with spruce, pine, and larch trees, lies at an altitude of some five thousand feet above the level of the sea. It often snows there in the month of August, but spring and early summer in the locality are delightful; and dotted about are numerous little romantic green lakes, glittering like emeralds in the sunshine. Those who slander these by comparing them to wash-bowls and cisterns, are simply troubled with the spleen, a malady which neither iron, iodine, nor yet sulphur, can cure.

One thing these discontented folks cannot deny, and that is that it would be difficult, not to say impossible, to find anywhere in the mountains more flowery and highly perfumed mossy banks than those of the Engadine. We do not make this assertion because of the rhododendrons that abound on the borders of the lakes: we are not fond of this showy, pretentious shrub, whose flowers look as if they were moulded in wax for the decoration of some altar; but is it not delightful to walk on a greensward, almost black with rich satyrion and vanilla? And what would you think of a wealth of gentians, large and small; great yellow arnicas; beautiful Martagon lilies; and St.-Bruno lilies; of every variety of daphne; of androsace, with its rose-coloured clusters; of the

flame-coloured orchis; of saxifrage; of great, velvety campanulas; of pretty violet asters, wrapped in a little, cravat-like tufting, to protect them from the cold? Besides, near the runnels, following whose borders the cattle have tracked out graded paths, there grows that species of immortelle called *Edelweiss*, an object of covetousness to every guest at the Baths. Higher up, near the glacier approach, may be found the white heart's-ease, the anemone, and the glacial ranunculus (spearwort); higher still, often buried beneath the snow, flourishes that charming little lilac flower, delicately cut, sensitive, quivering, as it were, with a cold, known as the soldanella. To scrape away the snow and find beneath it a flower! Are there often made such delightful discoveries in life?

Having said thus much, we must admit that the Rue de Saint Moritz does not resemble the Rue de la Paix of Paris. We must also admit that the markets of the place are poorly supplied, and that in an atmosphere well calculated to stimulate the appetite the wherewithal to supply this cannot always be obtained. We cannot have everything in this world; but it is by no means our intention to advise any one to take up his residence for life in the Engadine. There must, however, be some charm in this valley, since those of its inhabitants

who emigrate from it in their youth are very apt, after they have made money, to return to pass their old age in their natal place, where they build some very pretty houses.

Mlle. Moriaz did not find Saint Moritz disagreeable; the wildness of the scenery and the rugged pines pleased her. From the terrace of Hôtel Badrutt she loved to gaze upon the green lake, slumbering at her feet, and it never occurred to her to grumble because it had the form of a wash-bowl. She loved to see the cows returning at evening from the pasture. The cowherd in charge marshalled home in the most orderly manner his little drove, which announced its coming from afar by the tinkling of the cow-bells. Each one of the creatures stopped of itself at the entrance to its stall and demanded admittance by its lowing. In the morning, when they were turned out again, they awaited the arrival of the entire herd, and fell into rank and file, each in its proper place. The first time Mlle. Moriaz witnessed this ceremony, she found it as interesting as a first representation at the theatre or opera.

There were several rainy days, which she employed in reading, painting, and making observation on the human animals of both sexes whom she encountered at the *table d'hôte*. She soon

gained an increase of occupation. With her, mind and heart were so constantly on the alert that it was impossible for her to remain a week in a place without discovering some work of charity to be performed. A woman to whom she had taken a fancy, a little shopkeeper of the place, interested her in her daughter, who was destined to be a governess, and who desired to learn drawing. Antoinette undertook to give her drawing-lessons, making her come every day to the hotel, and often keeping her there several hours. Her pupil was rather dull of comprehension, and caused her to grow a little cross sometimes; but she always made amends to the girl by her caresses and sprightly talk.

The weather became fine again. Antoinette availed herself of the opportunity to take long promenades; she clambered up the mountain-slopes, over slippery turf, in the hope of carrying home some rare plant; but her strength was not equal to her valour—she could not succeed in scaling those heights where flourished the *Edelweiss*. A week after her arrival she had a surprise, we might even say a pleasurable emotion, which was not comprised in the programme of amusements that the proprietor of Hôtel Badrutt undertook to procure for his guests. Returning from an excur-

sion to Lake Silvaplana, she found in her chamber a basket containing a veritable sheaf of Alpine flowers, freshly gathered, and among them not only *Edelweiss* in profusion, but several very rare plants, and the rarest of all a certain bell-flower creeper, which smells like the apricot, and which, except in some districts of the Engadine, is only found now in Siberia. This splendid bouquet was accompanied by a note, thus conceived:

"A man who had had enough of life, resolved to hang himself. To execute his dolorous design, he selected a lonely and dismal spot, where there grew a solitary oak, whose sap was nearly exhausted. As he was engaged in securing his cord, a bird alighted on the half-dead tree and began to sing. The man said to himself: 'Since there is no spot so miserable that a bird will not deign to sing in it, I will have the courage to live.' And he lived.

"I arrived in this village disgusted with life, sorrowful and so weary that I longed to die. I saw you pass by, and I know not what mysterious virtue entered into me. I will live.

"'What matters it to me?' you will say, in reading these lines; and you will be right. My sole excuse for having written them is, that I will

leave here in a few days; that you never will see me again, never know who I am!"

The first impression of Antoinette was one of profound astonishment. She would have taken it for granted that there was some mistake had not her name been written in full on the envelope. Her second impulse was to laugh at her adventure. She accorded full justice to Mlle. Moriaz; she knew very well that she did not resemble the first chance comer; but that her beauty could work miracles, resurrections; that a hypochondriac, merely from seeing her pass by, was likely to regain his taste for existence, scarcely appeared admissible to her. So great was her curiosity, that she took the pains to make inquiries; the flowers and the letter had been left by a little peasant, who was not of the place, and who could not be found. Antoinette examined the hotel-register; she did not see there the handwriting of the letter. She studied the faces which surrounded her; there was not in Hôtel Badrutt a single romantic-looking person. Very speedily she renounced her search. The bouquet pleased her; she kept it as a present fallen from the skies, and preserved the letter as a curiosity, without long troubling herself to know who had written it. "Do not let us talk about it

any more, it is doubtless some lunatic," she replied one day to Mlle. Moiseney, who kept constantly recurring to the incident whose mystery she burned to fathom. The good demoiselle had been tempted to stop people in the road to ask, "Was it you?" Perchance she might have suspected her Bergün unknown to have a hand in the affair, had she had the least idea that he was at Saint Moritz, where she never had met him. He came there, nevertheless, every day, but at his own time; besides, the hotels were full to overflowing, and it was very easy to lose one's self in the crowd.

To tell the truth, when Count Abel Larinski came to Saint Moritz he was far less occupied with Mlle. Moriaz than with a certain illustrious chemist. The air of the Engadine and the waters that tasted like ink had worked marvels: in a week M. Moriaz felt like a new man. There had come to him a most formidable appetite, and he could walk for hours at a time without becoming weary. He abused his growing strength by constantly strolling through the mountains without a guide, hammer in hand; and every day, in spite of the remonstrances of his daughter, he increased the length of his excursions. The more people know, the more inquisitive they become; and, when one is inquisitive, one can go to great lengths without feeling

fatigue ; one only becomes conscious of this after the exertion is over. M. Moriaz never for a moment suspected that he was accompanied, at a respectful distance, on these solitary expeditions, by a stranger, who, with eyes and ears both on the alert, watched over him like a providence. The most peculiar part of the affair was that this providence would gladly have caused him to take a misstep, or thrust him into some quagmire, in order to have the pleasure of drawing him out, and bearing him in his arms to the Hôtel Badrutt. "If only he could fall into a hole and break his leg!" Such was the daily wish of Count Abel Larinski; but *savants* have great license allowed them. Although M. Moriaz was both corpulent and inclined to be absent-minded, he plunged into more than one quagmire without sticking fast, more than one marsh without having his progress impeded.

One morning he conceived the project of climbing up as high as a certain fortress of mountains whose battlements overhang a forest of pine and larch trees. He was not yet sufficiently accustomed to the mountains to realize how deceptive distances become there. After having drained two glasses of the chalybeate waters, and breakfasted heartily, he set out, crossed the Inn, and began the ascent to the forest. The slope grew

more and more abrupt, and ere long he discovered that he had wandered from the foot-path. He was not one to be easily disheartened; he continued climbing, laying hold of the brushwood with his hands, planting his feet among perfidious pine-needles, which form a carpet as smooth as a mirror, making three steps forward and two backward. Great drops of perspiration started out on his brow, and he sat down for a moment to wipe them away, hoping that some wood-cutter might appear and show him the way back to the path, if there was one. But no human soul came within sight; and plucking up his courage again he resumed the ascent, until he had nearly reached a breastwork of rock, in which he vainly sought an opening. He was about retracing his steps when he remembered that from the gallery of the hotel he had observed this breastwork of reddish rock, and it seemed to him that he remembered also that it formed the buttress of the mountain-stronghold of which he was in quest; and so he concluded that this would be the last obstacle he would have to overcome. He thought that it would be actually humiliating to be so near the goal and yet renounce it. The rock, worn by the frost, presented sundry crevices and indentures, forming a natural stairway. Arming himself with all his strength, and

making free use of his nails, he undertook to scale it, and in five minutes had gained a sort of plateau, which, unluckily for him, he found to be commanded by a smooth granite wall of a fearful height. The only satisfactory procedure for him now was to return whence he had come; but in these perilous passages to ascend is easier than to descend; it being impossible to choose one's steps, descent might lead to a rather undesirable adventure. M. Moriaz did not dare to risk this adventure.

He walked the whole length of the plateau where he found himself in the hope of discovering some outlet; but the sole outlet he could discover had already been monopolized by a mountain-torrent whose troubled waters noisily precipitated themselves through it to the depths below. This torrent was much too wide to wade, and to think of leaping over it would have been preposterous. All retreat being cut off, M. Moriaz began to regret his audacity. Seized by a sudden agony of alarm, he began to ask himself if he was not condemned to end his days in this eagle's-nest; he thought with envy of the felicity of the inhabitants of the plains; he cast piteous glances at the implacable wall whose frowning visage seemed to reproach him with his imprudence. It seemed to him

that the human mind never had devised anything more beautiful than a great highway ; and it would have taken little to make him exclaim with Panurge, "Oh, thrice—ay, quadruply—happy those who plant cabbages !"

Although there seemed small chance of his being heard in this solitude, he called aloud several times ; he had great difficulty in raising his voice above the noise of the cataract. Suddenly he believed that he heard below him a distant voice replying to his call. He redoubled his cries, and it seemed to him that the voice drew nearer, and soon he saw emerging from the thicket bordering the opposite bank of the torrent a pale face with chestnut beard, which he remembered having beheld in the cathedral at Chur, and to have seen again at Bergün.

"You are a prisoner, monsieur," was the salutation of Count Larinski ; for, of course, the newcomer was none other than he. "One moment's patience, and I am with you." And his face beamed with joy. He had him at last, this precious game which had caused him so many steps.

He turned away, bounding from rock to rock with the agility of a chamois. In about twenty minutes he reappeared, bearing on his shoulder a long plank which he had detached from the inclo-

sure of a piece of pasture-land. He threw it across the torrent, secured it as well as he could, crossed this impromptu foot-bridge of his own device, and joined M. Moriaz, who was quite ready to embrace him.

"Nothing is more perfidious than the mountains," said the count. "They are haunted by some mysterious sprite, who fairly delights in playing tricks with venturesome people; but 'all's well that ends well.' Before setting out from here you need something to revive you. The rarefied atmosphere of these high regions makes the stomach frightfully hollow. More prudent than you, I never undertake these expeditions without providing myself with some refreshment. But how pale you are!" he added, looking at him with sympathetic, almost tender, eyes. "Put on, I beg of you, my overcoat, and I will wrap myself up in my plaid, and then we will both be warm."

With these words he took off his overcoat and handed it to M. Moriaz, who, feeling almost frozen, offered feeble objections to donning the garment, although he had some difficulty in getting into the sleeves.

During this time Count Abel had thrown down on the rock the wallet he carried slung to a leathern strap over his shoulders. He drew forth from it

a loaf of light bread, some hard-boiled eggs, a *pâté* of venison, and a bottle of excellent burgundy. These provisions he spread out around him, and then presented to M. Moriaz a cup cut from a cocoanut-shell, and filled it to the brim, saying, "Here is something that will entirely restore you." M. Moriaz drained the cup, and soon felt his weakness disappear. His natural good spirits returned to him, and he gaily narrated to his Amphitryon his deplorable Odyssey. In return, Abel recounted to him a similar adventure he had had in the Carpathian Mountains. It is very easy to take a liking to a man who helps you out of a scrape, who gives you drink when you are thirsty, and food when you are hungry; but, even had not M. Moriaz been under great obligations to Count Larinski, he could not have avoided the discovery that this amiable stranger was a man of good address and agreeable conversation.

Nevertheless, so soon as the repast was finished, he said: "We have forgotten ourselves in our talk. I am the happy father of a charming daughter who has a vivid imagination. She will believe that I have met with an untimely end if I do not hasten as speedily as possible to reassure her."

Count Abel hereupon gave his hand to M. Moriaz to aid him in preserving his equilibrium

as he crossed the plank, which was not wide. Throughout the descent he overwhelmed him with attentions, sustaining him with his arm when the descent became too abrupt. So soon as they had made their way to a foot-path, they resumed their conversation. Abel was very clear-sighted, and, like Socrates, as we said before, he was master in the art of interrogating. He turned the conversation to erratic glaciers and boulders. M. Moriaz was enchanted with his manner of asking questions; as Professor of the College of France, he was well pleased to owe his life to an intelligent man.

As they traversed a pine-forest, they heard a voice hailing them, and they were shortly joined by a guide whom Mlle. Moriaz, mortally disquieted at the prolonged absence of her father, had sent in quest of him. Pale with emotion, trembling in every fibre, she had seated herself on the bank of a stream. She was completely a prey to terror, and in her imagination plainly saw her father lying half dead at the bottom of some precipice or rocky crevasse. On perceiving him she uttered a cry of joy and ran to meet him.

"Ah! truly, my love," said he, "I have been more fortunate than wise. And I shall have to ask my deliverer his name in order to present him to you."

Count Abel appeared not to have heard these last words. He stammered out something about M. Moriaz having exaggerated the worth of the little service it had been his good fortune to render him, and then with a cold, formal, dignified air, he bowed to Antoinette and moved hurriedly away, as a man who cares little to make new acquaintances, and who longs to get back to his solitude.

He was already at some distance when M. Moriaz, who had been busily recounting his adventures to his daughter, bethought him that he had kept his deliverer's overcoat. He searched in the pockets, and there found a memorandum-book and some visiting-cards bearing the name of Count Abel Larinski. Before dinner he made the tour of all the hotels in Saint Moritz without discovering where M. Larinski lodged. He learned it in the evening, from a peasant who came over from Cellarina for the overcoat.

The good Mlle. Moiseney was quite taken with Count Abel; first, because he was handsome, and then because he played the piano bewitchingly. There could be no doubt that Antoinette would feel grateful to this good-looking musician who had restored to her her father. Certain of being

no longer thwarted in her enthusiasm, she said to her that evening, with a smile which was meant to be excessively ironical:

"Well, my dear, do you still think that Count Larinski has a stoop in his shoulders, and that his head is badly poised?"

"It is a matter of small import, but I do not gainsay it."

"Ah, if you had only heard him play one of Schumann's romances!"

"A talent for music is a noble one. Nevertheless, the man's chief merit, in my eyes, is that he has a taste for saving life."

"Oh, I was sure from the first, perfectly sure, that this man had a large heart and a noble soul. I read physiognomies very correctly, and I never need to see people twice to know how far they can be relied on." After a pause she added, "I wonder if I dare tell you, my dear, of an idea that has occurred to me?"

"Tell me, by all means. Your ideas sometimes amuse me."

"Might it not turn out that the author of a certain note, and sender of a certain thing, was M. le Comte Abel Larinski?"

"Why he rather than any other?" queried Antoinette. "I believe you do him wrong: he ap-

pears to be a gentleman, and gentlemen do not write anonymous letters."

"Oh! that was a very innocent one, and you may be sure that he wrote it in perfect good faith."

"You believe, then, mademoiselle, that in good faith a man about to put a halter about his neck would renounce his project because he had encountered Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz on a public highway?"

"Why not?" cried Mlle. Moiseney, looking at her with eyes wide open with admiration. "Besides, you know the Poles are a hot-headed people, whose hearts are open to all noble enthusiasms. One could pardon in Count Larinski what could not be overlooked in a Parisian."

"I will pardon him on condition that he will keep his promise and never make himself known to me, for this is unquestionably the first duty of a mysterious unknown. Just now he refused to let my father present him to me, which is a good mark in his favour. If he alters his mind, he becomes at once a condemned man. I pity you, my dear Joan," added Antoinette, laughingly. "You are dying with longing to hear one of those romances without words, which M. Larinski plays so divinely; and if M. Larinski be the man of the

letter, his own avowal prohibits him from appearing before me again. How can you extricate yourself from this dilemma? The case is embarrassing."

It was M. Moriaz who undertook the solution of this embarrassing dilemma. Three days later, some moments before dinner, he was walking in the hotel-grounds, smoking a cigar. He saw passing along the road Count Abel, on his way back to Cellarina. A storm was coming up; already great drops of rain were beginning to fall. M. Moriaz ran after the count and seized him by the button, saying: "You have saved my life—permit me, at least, to save you from the rain. Do me the honour to share our dinner; we will have it served in my apartment."

Abel strongly resisted this proposition, giving reasons that sounded like mere pretences. A rumbling of thunder was heard. M. Moriaz took his man by the arm, and led him in by force. He presented him to his daughter, saying: "Antoinette, let me present to you M. le Comte Larinski, a most excellent man, but little inclined to sociability. I was compelled to use violence in bringing him here."

The count acknowledged these remarks with a constrained smile. He wore the manner of a

prisoner; but, as he prided himself on his good-breeding and on his philosophy, he seemed to be endeavouring to make the best of his prison. During dinner he was grave. He treated Antoinette with frigid politeness, paid some attention to Mlle. Moiseney, but reserved his chief assiduities for M. Moriaz. He addressed his conversation more particularly to him, and listened to him with profound respect. A professor is always sensible to this kind of courtesy.

After the coffee was served, the crusting of ice in which Count Abel had incased himself began to thaw. He had been all over the world; he knew the United States and Turkey, New Orleans and Bucharest, San Francisco and Constantinople. His travels had been profitable to him: he had observed men and things, countries and institutions, customs and laws, the indigenous races and the settlers, all but the transient visitors, with whom he seemed to have had no time to occupy himself; at least they formed no part of his conversation. He related several anecdotes, with some show of sprightliness; his melancholy began to melt away, he even indulged in little bursts of gaiety, and Antoinette could not avoid comparing him and his discourse to some of the more rigorous passages of the Engadine, where, amid the

black shades of the pines, among frowning rocks, there are to be found lilies, gentians, and lakes.

He resumed his gravity to reply to a question of M. Moriaz concerning Poland. "Unhappy Poland!" cried he. "To-day the Jew is its master. Active, adroit, inventive, little scrupulous, he makes capital out of our indolence and our improvidence. He has over us one great advantage, which is simply that, while we live from day to day, he possesses a notion of a to-morrow; we despise him, and we could not do without him. We are always thirsty, and he supplies us with drink; we never have ready money, and he loans it to us at an enormous rate of interest; we cannot return it to him, and he reimburses himself by seizing our goods and chattels, our jewels, our land, and our castles. We take out our revenge in insolence, and from time to time in petty persecutions, and we gradually arrive at the conclusion that the sole means of freeing ourselves from the yoke of the Jew would be to conquer the vices by which he lives." Count Abel added that for his part he had no prejudice against these children of Abraham, and he quoted the words of an Austrian publicist who said that each country had the kind of Jews it deserved. "In fact," he continued, "in England, as in France, and in

every country where they are placed on a footing of equality, they become one of the most wholesome, most vigorous elements of the nation, while they are the scourge, the leeches, of the countries that persecute them."

"And, truly, justice demands that it should be so," cried Mlle. Moriaz.

For the first time the count addressed himself directly to her, saying, with a smile: "How is this, mademoiselle? You are a woman, and you love justice!"

"This astonishes you, monsieur?" she rejoined. "You do not think justice one of our virtues?"

"A woman of my acquaintance," he replied, "always maintained that it would be rendering a very bad service to this poor world of ours to suppress all injustice, because with the same stroke would also be suppressed all charity."

"That is not my opinion," said she. "When I give, it seems to me that I make restitution."

"She is somewhat of a socialist," cried M. Moriaz. "I perceive it every January in making out her accounts, and it is fortunate that she intrusts this to me, for she never takes the trouble to look at the memorandum her banker sends her."

"I am proud for Poland that Mlle. Moriaz has a Polish failing," said Abel Larinski, gallantly.

"Is it a failing?" queried Antoinette.

"Arithmetic is the most beautiful of the sciences and the mother of certainty," said M. Moriaz. And turning towards the count, he added: "She is very wrong-headed, this girl of mine; she holds absolutely revolutionary principles, dangerous to public order and the preservation of society. Why, she maintains that people who are in need have a right to the superfluities of others!"

"That appears to me self-evident," said she.

"And, for example," further continued M. Moriaz, "she has among her *protégés* a certain Mlle. Galard——"

"Galet," said Mlle. Moiseney, bridling up, for she had been impatiently awaiting an opportunity to put in a word.

"This Mlle. Léontine Galet, who lives at No. 25 Rue Mouffetard——"

"No. 27," again interposed Mlle. Moiseney, in a magisterial tone.

"As usual, you are sure of it, perfectly sure. Very good! This Mlle. Galard or Galet, residing at No. 25 or No. 27 Rue Mouffetard, was formerly a florist by trade, and now she has not a sou. I do not wish to fathom the mysteries of her past—it is very apt to be 'lightly come, lightly go' with

the money of these people—but certain it is that Mlle. Galard——"

"Galet," put in Mlle. Moiseney, sharply.

"Is to-day an infirm old woman, a worthy object of the compassion of charitable people," continued M. Moriaz, heedless of this last interruption. "Mlle. Moriaz allows her a pension, with which I find no fault; but Mlle. Galet—I mistake, Mlle. Galard—has retained from her former calling her passion for flowers, and during the winter Mlle. Moriaz sends her every week a bouquet costing from ten to twelve francs, which shows, according to my opinion, a lack of common-sense. In the month of January last, she sent for Parma violets for this *protégée* of hers. Now, I appeal to M. Larinski—is this reasonable, or is it absurd?"

"It is admirably absurd and foolishly admirable," replied the count.

"The flowers I give her are never so beautiful as some that were sent me the other day," exclaimed Mlle. Moriaz.

She went then into the next room, and returned, carrying the vase of water containing the mysterious bouquet. "What do you think of these?" she asked the count. "They are already much faded, and yet I think they are beautiful still."

He admired the bouquet; but, although An-

toinette regarded him fixedly, she detected neither blush nor confusion on his face. "It was not he," she said to herself.

There was a piano in the room where they had dined. As Count Abel was taking leave, Mlle. Moiseney begged him to give Mlle. Moriaz proof of his talent. He slightly knit his brows at this request, and resumed that sombre, almost savage, air he had worn when he met Antoinette at the foot of the mountain. He urged in excuse the lateness of the hour, but he allowed the promise to be wrested from him that he would be more complaisant the next day.

When he was gone, accompanied by M. Moriaz, who said he would walk a little distance with him, Antoinette exclaimed: "You see, my dear—it was not he."

"Suppose I was wrong," replied Mlle. Moiseney, in a piqued tone—"you will at least grant that he is handsome?"

"As handsome as you please. Do you know what I think of when I look at him? A haunted castle. And I feel curious to make the acquaintance of the goblins that visit it."

Notwithstanding his promise, Count Larinski did not reappear before the lapse of three days; but this time he gave all the music that was asked

of him. His memory was surprising, and his whole soul seemed to be at the ends of his fingers; and he drew marvellous strains from an instrument which, in itself, was far from being a marvel. He sang, too; he had a barytone voice, mellow and resonant. After having hummed in a low tone some Roumanic melodies, he struck up one of his own national songs. This he failed to finish; tears started in his eyes, emotion overpowerd his voice. He broke off abruptly, asking pardon for the weakness that had caused him to make himself ridiculous; but one glance at Mlle. Moriaz convinced him that she did not find him ridiculous.

A most invaluable resource, indeed, in a mountain-country where the evenings are long, is a Pole who knows how to talk and to sing. M. Moriaz liked music; but he liked something else besides. When he could not go into society and was forbidden to work, he grew sleepy after dinner; in order to rouse himself he was glad to play a hand of *bézique* or *écarté*. For want of some one better, he played with Mlle. Moiseney; but this makeshift was little to his taste; he disliked immensely coming into too close proximity with the pinched visage and yellow ribbons of Pope Joan. He proposed to Count Larinski to take a hand with him, and his proposal was accepted with the best grace

in the world. "Decidedly this man is good for everything," thought M. Moriaz, and he conceived a great liking for him. The result was, that during an entire week Count Abel passed every evening at the Hôtel Badrutt.

"Your father is a most peculiar man," said Mlle. Moiseney, indignantly, to Antoinette. "He is shockingly egotistical. He has confiscated M. Larinski. The idea of employing such a man as that to play *bézique*! He will stop coming."

But the count's former savageness seemed wholly subdued. He did not stop coming.

One evening M. Moriaz committed an imprudence. In making an odd trick, he carelessly asked M. Larinski who had been his piano professor.

"One whose portrait I always carry about me," was the reply.

And, drawing from his vest-pocket a medallion, he presented it to M. Moriaz, who, after having looked at it, passed it over to his daughter. The medallion contained the portrait of a woman with blond hair, blue eyes, a refined, lovely mouth, a fragile, delicate being with countenance at the same time sweet and sad, the face of an angel, but an angel who had lived and suffered.

"What an exquisite face!" cried Mlle. Moriaz.

Truly it was exquisite. Some one has asserted that a Polish woman is like punch made with holy-water. One may like neither the punch nor the holy-water, and yet be very fond of Polish women. They form one of the best chapters in the great book of the Creator.

"It is the portrait of my mother," said Count Larinski.

"Are you so fortunate as to still possess her?" asked Antoinette.

"She was a tender flower," he replied; "and tender flowers never live long."

"Her portrait shows it plainly; one can see that she suffered much, but was resigned to live."

For the first time the count departed from the reserve he had shown towards Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz. "I have no words to tell you," he exclaimed, "how happy I am that my mother pleases you!"

Othello was accused of having employed secret philters to win Desdemona's love. Brabantio had only himself to blame; he had taken a liking to Othello, and often invited him to come to him; he did not make him play *bézique*, but he questioned him on his past. The Moor recounted his life, his sufferings, his adventures, and Desdemona wept. The fathers question, the heroes or adven-

turers recount, and the daughters weep. Such are the outlines of a history as old as the world. Abel Larinski had left the card-table. He had taken his seat in an arm-chair, facing Mlle. Moiseney. He was questioned; he replied.

His destiny had been neither light nor easy. He was quite young when his father, Count Witold Larinski, implicated in a conspiracy, had been compelled to flee from Warsaw. His property was confiscated, but luckily he had some investments away from home, which prevented him from being left wholly penniless. He was a man of projects. He emigrated to America with his wife and his son; he dreamed of making a name and a fortune by cutting a canal through the Isthmus of Panama. He repaired to New Granada, there to make his studies and his charts. He made them so thoroughly that he died of yellow fever before having begun his work, having come to the end of his money and leaving his widow in the most cruel destitution. Countess Larinski said to her son: "We have nothing more to live on; but, then, is it so necessary to live?" She uttered these words with an angelic smile about her lips. Abel set out for California. He undertook the most menial services; he swept the streets, acted as porter; what cared he, so long as

his mother did not die of hunger? All that he earned he sent to her, enduring himself the most terrible privations, making her think that he denied himself nothing. In the course of time Fortune favoured him; he had acquired a certain competency. The countess came to rejoin him in San Francisco; but angels cannot live in the rude, exciting atmosphere of the gold-seekers; they suffer, spread their wings, and fly away. Some weeks after having lost his mother—it was in 1863—Count Abel learned from a journal that fell into his hands that Poland had risen again. He was twenty-one years of age. He thought he heard a voice calling him, and another voice from the skies whispered: "She calls thee. Go; it is thy duty." And he went. Two months later he crossed the frontier of Galicia to join the bands of Langiewicz.

Othello spoke to Desdemona of caverns, deserts, quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven; of cannibals, the anthropophagi, and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders. Count Abel spoke to Mlle. Moriaz of the fortunes and vicissitudes of partisan warfare, of vain exploits, of obscure glories, of bloody encounters that never are decisive, of defeats from which survive hope, hunger, thirst, cold, snow stained with blood, and

long captivities in forests, tracked by the enemy; then disasters, discouragements, the vanishing of the last hope, punishment, the gallows, and finally a mute, feverish resignation, swallowed up in that vast solitude with which silence surrounds misfortune. After the dispersion of the band whose destinies he had followed, he had gone over to Roumania.

This narration, exact and precise, bore the impress of truth. Count Abel made it in a simple, modest tone, keeping himself as much as possible in the background, and growing persuasive without apparent effort. There were moments when his face would flame up with enthusiasm, when his voice would become husky and broken, when he would seek for a word, become impatient because he could not find it, find it at last, and this effort added to the energy of his spasmodic and disjointed eloquence. In conclusion, he said: "In his youth man believes himself born to roll; the day comes when he experiences the necessity of being seated. I am seated; my seat is a little hard, but when I am tempted to murmur, I think of my mother and refrain."

"What did you do in Roumania?" inquired M. Moriaz, who liked to have stories circumstantially detailed.

"Ah! I beg of you to excuse me from recounting to you the worst employed years of my life. I am my father's own son. He dreamed of cutting through an isthmus, I of inventing a gun. I spent four years of my life in fabricating it, and the first time it was used it burst."

And thereupon he plunged into a somewhat humorous description of his invention, his hopes, his golden dreams, his disappointments, and his chagrin. "The only admirable thing in the whole affair," he concluded, "and something that I believe never has happened to any other inventor, is that I am cured entirely of my chimera; I defy it to take possession of me again. I propose to put myself under discipline in order to expiate my extravagance. So soon as my cure is entirely finished I will set out for Paris, where I will do penance."

"What kind of penance?" asked M. Moriaz. "Paris is not a hermitage."

"Nor is it my intention to live there as a hermit," was the reply, given with perfect simplicity. "I go to give lessons in music and in the languages."

"Indeed!" exclaimed M. Moriaz. "Do you see no other career open to you, my dear count?"

"I am no longer a count," he replied, with an

heroic smile. "Counts do not run about giving private lessons." And a strange light flashed in his eyes as he spoke. "I shall run about giving private lessons until I hear anew the voice that spoke to me in California. It will find me ever ready; my reply will be: 'I belong to thee; dispose of me at thy pleasure.' Ah! this chimera is one that I never will renounce!"

Then suddenly he started as one just awakening from a dream; he drew his hand over his brow, looked confusedly around him, and said: "*Grand Dieu!* here I have been talking to you of myself for two hours! It is the most stupid way of passing one's time, and I promise you it shall not happen again."

With these words he rose, took up his hat, and left.

M. Moriaz paced the floor for some moments, his hands behind his back; presently he said: "This *diable* of a man has strangely moved me. One thing alone spoils his story for me—that is the gun. A man who once has drunk will drink again; one who has invented will invent again. No man in the world ever remained satisfied with his first gun."

"I beg of you, monsieur," cried Mlle. Moiseney, "could you not speak to the Minister of War about adopting the Larinski musket?"

"Are you your country's enemy?" he asked. "Do you wish its destruction? Have you sworn that after Alsace we must lose Champagne?"

"I am perfectly sure," she replied, mounting on her high horse, "that the Larinski musket is a *chef-d'œuvre*, and I would pledge my life that he who invented it is a man of genius."

"If you would pledge your word of honour to that, mademoiselle," he replied, making her a profound bow, "you may well feel assured that the French Government would not hesitate a moment."

Mlle. Moriaz took no part in this conversation. Her face slightly contracted, buried in her thoughts as in a solitude inaccessible to earthly sounds, her cheek resting in the palm of her left hand, she held in her right hand a paper-cutter, and she kept pricking the point into one of the grooves of the table on which her elbow rested, while her half-closed eyes were fixed on a knot of the mahogany. She saw in this knot the Isthmus of Panama, San Francisco, the angelic countenance of the beautiful Polish woman who had given birth to Count Abel Larinski; she saw there also fields of snow, ambuscades, retreats more glorious than victories, and, beyond all else, the bursting of a gun and of a man's heart.

She arose, and saluted her father without a word. In crossing the *salon* she perceived that M. Larinski had forgotten a book he had left on the piano when he came in. She opened the volume; he had written his name on the top of the first page, and Antoinette recognised the handwriting of the note.

Shut up in her own room, while taking down and combing her hair, her imagination long wandered through California and Poland. She compared M. Larinski with all the other men she ever had known, and she concluded that he resembled none of them. And it was he who had written: "I arrived in this village disgusted with life, sorrowful and so weary that I longed to die. I saw you pass by, and I know not what mysterious virtue entered into me. I will live."

It seemed to her that for long years she had been seeking some one, and that she had done well to come to the Engadine, because here she had found the object of her search.

CHAPTER III

Two, three, four days passed without Count Larinski reappearing at the Hôtel Badrutt, where every evening he was expected. This prolonged absence keenly affected Mlle. Moriaz. She sought an explanation thereof; the search occupied part of her days, and troubled her sleep. She had too much character not to conceal her trouble and anxiety. Those about her had not the least suspicion that she asked herself a hundred times in the twenty-four hours: "Why does he not come? will he never come again? is it a fixed resolution? Does his proud soul regret the confidence that he gave us? Does he blame us for drawing out, by our questions, the secret of his life? or does he suspect that I have discovered him to be the writer of the anonymous letter? Will he leave the Engadine without bidding us good-bye? Perhaps he has already gone, and we shall never see him again." This thought caused Mlle. Moriaz a heart-burn that she never before had experienced. Her day had come; her heart

was no longer free : the bird had allowed itself to be caught.

Mlle. Moiseney said to her one evening : " It seems certain to me that we never shall see Count Larinski again."

She replied in an almost indifferent tone, " No doubt he has found people at Cellarina, or elsewhere, who are more entertaining than we."

" You mean to say," said Mlle. Moiseney, " that M. Moriaz and the *bézique* has frightened him away. I would not for worlds speak ill of your father ; he has all the good qualities imaginable, except a certain delicacy of sentiment, which is not to be learned in dealing with acids. Think of condemning a Count Larinski to play *bézique* ! There are some things that your father does not and never will understand."

M. Moriaz had entered meanwhile. " Please oblige me by explaining what it is that I do not understand," said he to Mlle. Moiseney.

She replied with some embarrassment, " You do not understand, monsieur, that certain visits were a charming diversion to us, and that now we miss them."

" And do you think that I do not miss them ? It has been four days since I have had a game of cards. But how can it be helped ?

Poles are fickle—more fools they who trust them."

"It may be simply that M. Larinski has been ill," interrupted Antoinette, with perfect tranquility. "I think, father, that it would be right for us to make inquiries."

The following day M. Moriaz went to Cellarina. He brought back word that M. Larinski had gone on a walking-excursion through the mountains; that he had started out with the intention of climbing to the summit of Piz-Morteratsch, and of attempting the still more difficult ascent of Piz-Roseg. Mlle. Moriaz found it hard to decide whether this news was good or bad news. All depended on what point of view was taken, and she changed hers every hour.

Since his mishap, M. Moriaz had become less rash than formerly. Experience had taught him that there are treacherous rocks that can be climbed without much difficulty, but from which it is impossible to descend—rocks exposing one to the danger of ending one's days in their midst, if there be no Pole near at hand. Certain truths stamp themselves indelibly on the mind; so M. Moriaz never ventured again on the mountains without being attended by a guide, who received orders from Antoinette not to leave him, and not to let

him expose himself. One day he came in later than usual, and his daughter reproached him, with some vivacity, for the continual anxiety he caused her. "The glaciers and precipices will end by giving me the nightmare," she said to him.

"Pray on whose account, my dear?" he playfully rejoined. "I assure you the ascent that I have just made was neither more difficult nor more dangerous than that of Montmartre, nor of the Sannois Hill, and as to glaciers, I have firmly resolved to keep shy of them. I have passed the age of prowess. My guide has been making me tremble by relating the dangers to which he was exposed in 1864 on Morteratsch, where he had accompanied Professor Tyndall and another English tourist. They were all swept away by an avalanche. Attached to the same rope, they went down with the snow. A fall of three hundred metres! They would have been lost, if, through the presence of mind of one of the guides, they had not succeeded in stopping themselves two feet from a frightful precipice, which was about to swallow them up. I am a father, and I do not despise life. Let him ascend Morteratsch who likes! I wish our friend Larinski had made the descent safe and sound. If he has met an avalanche on the way, he will invent no more guns."

Antoinette was no longer mistress of her nerves: during the entire evening she was so preoccupied that M. Moriaz could not fail to notice it; but he had no suspicion of the cause. He was profoundly versed in qualitative and quantitative analysis, but less skilled in the analysis of his daughter's heart. "How pale you are!" he said to her. "Are you not well? You are cold.—Pray, Mlle. Moiseney, make yourself useful and prepare her a mulled egg; you know I do not permit her to be sick."

It was not the mulled egg that restored Mlle. Moriaz's colour. The next morning as she was giving a drawing lesson to her *protégée*, Count Abel was announced. She trembled; the blood rose in her cheeks, and she could not conceal her agitation from the penetrating gaze of the audacious charmer. It might easily be seen that he had just descended from where the eagles themselves seldom ascend. His face was weather-beaten by the ice and snow. He had successfully accomplished the double ascent, of which he was compelled to give an account. In descending from Morteratsch he had been overtaken by a storm, and had come very near never again seeing the valley or Mlle. Moriaz. He owed his life to the presence of mind and courage of his guide, on whom he could not bestow sufficient praise.

While he modestly narrated his exploits, Antoinette had dismissed her pupil. He seemed embarrassed by the *tête-à-tête* which, nevertheless, he had sought. He rose, saying: "I regret not being able to see M. Moriaz; I came to bid him farewell. I leave this evening."

She summoned courage and replied: "You did well to come; you left a volume of Shakespeare—here it is." Then drawing from her notebook a paper—"I have still another restitution to make to you. I have had the misfortune to discover that it was you who wrote this letter."

With these words she handed him the anonymous note. He changed countenance, and it was now his turn to grow red. "Who can prove to you," he demanded, "that I am the author of this offence, or rather crime?"

"Every bad case may be denied, but do not you deny."

After a moment's silence, he replied: "I will not lie, I am not capable of lying. Yes, I am the guilty one; I confess it with sorrow, because you are offended by my audacity."

"I never liked madrigals, either in prose or verse, signed or anonymous," she returned, rather dryly.

He exclaimed, "You took this letter for a

madrigal?" Then, having reread it, he deliberately tore it up, throwing the pieces into the fireplace, and added, smiling: "It certainly lacked common-sense; he who wrote it is a fool, and I have nothing to say in his defence."

Crossing her hands on her breast, and uplifting to him her brown eyes, that were as proud as gentle, she softly murmured, "What more?"

"I came to Chur," he replied, "I entered a church, I there saw a fair unknown, and I forgot myself in gazing at her. That evening I saw her again; she was walking in a garden where there was music, and this music of harps and violins was grateful to me. I said within myself: 'What a thing is the heart of man! The woman who has passed me by without seeing me does not know me, will never know of my existence; I am ignorant of even her name, and I wish to remain so, but I am conscious that she exists, and I am glad, content, almost happy. She will be for me the fair unknown; she cannot prevent me from remembering her. I will think sometimes of the fair unknown of Chur.'"

"Very good," said she, "but this does not explain the letter."

"We are coming to that," he continued. "I was seated in a copse, by the roadside. I had

the blues—was profoundly weary; there are times when life weighs on me like a torturing burden. I thought of disappointed expectations, of dissipated illusions, of the bitterness of my youth and of my future. You passed by on the road, and I said to myself, 'There is good in life, because of such encounters, in which we catch renewed glimpses of what was once pleasant for us to see.'"

"And the note?" she asked again, in a dreamy tone.

He went on: "I never was a philosopher; wisdom consists in performing only useful actions, and I was born with a taste for the useless. That evening I saw you climb a hill, in order to gather some flowers; the hill was steep and you could not reach the flowers. I gathered them for you, and, in sending my bouquet, I could not resist the temptation of adding a word. 'Before doing penance,' I said to myself, 'let me commit this one folly; it shall be the last.' We always flatter ourselves that each folly will be our last. The unfortunate note had scarcely gone, when I regretted having sent it; I would have given much to have had it back; I felt all its impropriety; I have dealt justly by it in tearing it to pieces. My only excuse was my firm resolution not to meet

you, not to make your acquaintance. Chance ordered otherwise: I was presented to you, you know by whom, and how; I ended by coming here every evening, but I rebelled against my own weakness, I condemned myself to absence for a few days, so as to break a dangerous habit, and, thank God! I have broken my chain."

She lightly tapped the floor with the tip of her foot, and demanded with the air of a queen recalling a subject to his allegiance, "Are you to be believed?"

He had spoken in a half-serious, half-jesting tone, tinged with the playful melancholy that was natural to him. He changed countenance, his face flushed, and he cried out abruptly, "I regained my strength and will on the summit of Morteratsch, and I only return to bid you farewell, and to give you the assurance that I never will see you again."

"It is a strange case," she replied; "but I pardon you, on condition that you do not execute your threat. You are resolved to be wise; the wise avoid extremes. You will remember that you have friends in Paris. My father has many connections; if we can be of service to you in any way——"

He did not permit her to finish, and responded

proudly: "I thank you, with all my heart. I have sworn to be under obligations to none but myself."

"Very well," she replied, "you will visit us for our pleasure. In a month we shall be at Cormeilles."

He shook his head in sign of refusal. She looked fixedly at him, and said, "It must be so."

This look, these words, sent to Count Abel's brain such a thrill of joy and of hope that for a moment he thought he had betrayed himself. He nearly fell on his knees before Mlle. Moriaz, which certainly would have spoiled everything; but, speedily mastering his emotions, he bowed gravely, casting down his eyes. She herself immediately resumed her usual voice and manner, and questioned him on his journey. He told her, in reply, that he proposed to go by the route of Soleure, and to stay there a day in order to visit in Gurzelengasse the house where Kosciuszko, the greatest of Poles, had died. He had thought of this pilgrimage for a long time. He added: "Still another useless action. Ah! when shall I improve?"

"Don't improve too much," she said, smiling. And then he went away.

M. Moriaz returned to the hotel about noon:

his guide being engaged elsewhere, he had taken only a short ramble. After breakfast his daughter proposed to him that he should go down with her to the banks of the lake. They made the descent, which is not difficult. This pretty piece of water, that has been falsely accused of resembling a shaving-dish, is said to be not less than a mile in length. When the father and daughter reached the entrance of the woods that pedestrians pass through in going to Pontresina, they seated themselves on the grass at the foot of a larch. They remained some time silent. Antoinette watched the cows grazing, and stroked the smooth, glossy leaves of a yellow gentian with the end of her parasol. M. Moriaz busied himself with neither the cows nor the yellow gentian—he thought of M. Camille Langis, and felt more than a little guilty in that quarter ; he had not written to him, having nothing satisfactory to tell him. He could see the young man waiting, in vain, at the Hôtel Steinbock. To pass a fortnight at Chur is a torture that the most robust constitution scarcely can endure, and it is an increased torture to watch every evening and every morning for a letter that never comes. M. Moriaz resolved to open hostilities, to begin a new assault on the impregnable place. He was seeking in his mind for a begin-

ning for his first phrase. He had just found it, when suddenly Antoinette said to him, in a low, agitated, but distinct voice: "I have a question for you. What would you think if I should some day marry M. Abel Larinski?"

M. Moriaz started up, and his cane, slipping from his hand, rolled to the bottom of the declivity. He looked at his daughter, and said to her: "I beg of you to repeat what you just said to me. I fear I have misunderstood you."

She answered in a firmer voice, "I am curious to know what you would think if I should marry, some day or other, Count Larinski."

He was startled, thunderstruck. He never had foreseen that such a catastrophe could occur, nor had the least suspicion that anything had passed between his daughter and M. Larinski. Of all ideas that had suggested themselves to him, this seemed the least admissible, the most improbable and ridiculous. After a long silence, he said to Antoinette, "You want to frighten me—this is not serious."

"Do you dislike M. Larinski?" she asked.

"Certainly not; I by no means dislike him. He has good manners, he speaks well, and I must acknowledge that he had a very graceful way of taking me from off my rock, where I should still

30089

be had it not been for him. I am grateful to him for it; but, from that to giving him my daughter, there is a wide margin. If he wanted me to give him a medal he should have it."

"Let us talk seriously," said she. "What objections have you to make?"

"First, M. Larinski is a stranger, and I mistrust strangers. Then, I know him but slightly. I naturally demand additional information. Finally, I own that the state of his affairs——"

"Ah! that is the main point," she interrupted. "He is poor; that is his crime, which he has not disguised. How differently we think! I have some fortune; its only advantage that I can see is that it makes me free to marry the man I esteem, though he be poor."

"And perhaps a little because of that very reason," interrupted M. Moriaz, in his turn. "Come, I entreat you, let me explain the anxieties arising from my miserable good sense. M. Larinski has related his history to us. Frankly, do you not think that it is rather that—what shall I say—of an adventurer? The word shocks you—I take it back—but you must admit that this Pole belongs to the—ambulatory family."

"Or family of heroes," she replied.

"That is it, of wandering heroes. I wish all

manner of good to heroes, although I never have clearly discovered their use. At all events, I am not sure that they are the best qualified men in the world to make a wife happy, and I intend that my daughter shall be happy."

"You are not convinced as I am that M. Larinski has a superior mind, and a heart of gold?"

"A heart of gold! I should be glad to believe it. I have no reason to doubt it; but many very skilful persons are deceived by false jewellery. Ah! my dear, if you were better versed in chemistry, you would know how easy it is to manufacture a false trinket. Formerly, after having cleaned the piece to be gilded, a gold amalgam was applied. Now, the brass or copper trinket is steeped in a solution of perchloride of gold and bicarbonate of potash, and in less than a minute the thing is accomplished. It is called gilding by immersion. There is another process in which galvanism— But let us admit that M. Larinski's heart is real gold. In the purest gold there is usually some alloy, to dispense with which resort must be had to the cupel. Do you not know what a cupel is? It is a small capsule or cup of a porous substance, used in the refining process, and possessing the property of absorbing the fused oxides and retaining the refined metal. What is

the proportion of lead or of gold ore in M. Larinski's heart? Neither you nor I know."

She was no longer listening; her chin in her hand, her glances wandered over the glade. He touched her arm gently to rouse her, and said: "It is all over? You love him?"

"Why will you make me say so?" she replied, blushing.

"And he has declared himself? He has dared——"

"He has dared nothing. Ah! how little you know him! If you were to offer me to him, his pride would say no, and I would have to go down on my knees to get the better of his refusal."

"We will say, at once, that he is unique, that he is a marvel, that there is not a second Pole like him; the mould has been broken. And yet are you sure that he loves you?"

She replied by a motion of the head.

"I should confess," he resumed, "that the passion that is called the grand passion is for me a sealed letter, the mystery of mysteries. I am completely ignorant of it. Yet that did not prevent my marrying, and making a choice that brought me great happiness. Your method is different, and I must believe that you have yielded to an irresistible force. It seems to me, however,

that resistance can always be made. You have will, character——"

She interrupted him, murmuring, "It is either he or no one."

"Oh! if it comes to that," he continued, "you are of age, and mistress of your actions; there is nothing for me but to submit. Still, it will be painful to you, I like to believe, to marry in opposition to my wishes."

"Do you doubt it? I am willing not to marry."

"Bad solution! It is worse than the other. Let us come to terms. The positive has its place only in science. It is absolutely true that borax is a salt composed of boracic acid and soda. Beyond such facts all is uncertain. Does this happy man surmise the sentiments he has inspired?"

"I tell you that you do not know him? Do you take him for a coxcomb? When he came this morning to announce his departure, his serious intention was to bid us an eternal farewell, and never to see me again."

"A most excellent idea that," sighed M. Moriaz. "Unfortunately, you represented to him that it took but two hours to go from Paris to Cormeilles."

"I had trouble to persuade him of it."

"Well, since the matter stands thus, nothing is yet lost. You know, my dear, that my physician advised me to beware of abrupt transitions, and not to change too suddenly from the keen air of Engadine to the heavy atmosphere of the plains. On leaving Saint Moritz, we will descend five hundred metres lower, and remain three weeks at Churwalden; consequently, we will not be in Paris for a month. You will employ this month in somewhat calming your imagination. It is very easy for it to become excited in these mountain-holes, without taking into account the wearisomeness of hotel-life. From the very day after our arrival you took a dislike to the paper in our little *salon*, and its squares, I confess, are very ugly. In every square, a thrush stretching out its neck to peck a currant. Two hundred thrushes and two hundred currants—it was enough to weary you to death. Suddenly there appears a Pole——"

"The thrushes had nothing to do with it," she replied, smiling. "A month hence I shall say as I do to-day, 'It is either he or no one,' and you shall choose."

"Do not repeat that formula, I beg. Fixed resolves are the prison-house of the will. Promise me to reflect; reflection is an excellent thing.

One thing more—grant me in advance what I am going to ask you."

"It is granted."

"You have a godmother——"

"Ah! now we are coming to the point," she said.

"You cannot deny that Mme. de Lorcy is a woman of the world, a woman of good sense, a woman of experience, who is deeply interested in your welfare——"

"And who has decided, from time immemorial, that I can only be happy on condition that I marry her nephew, M. Camille Langis."

"Well, I admit that she is partial. That is no reason why we should not send her our Pole. She will inspect him, she will tell us her opinion; it will be a new element in the argument."

"Ah! I know her opinion without asking it. This woman of experience and good sense is incapable of recognising merit in a man who is sufficiently impertinent to make Mlle. Moriaz love him, without having at least fifty thousand livres a year to offer her."

"What does that matter? We will let her speak—we need not question her, an oracle; but she knows false jewellery. If she discover——"

"I would require proofs," she interrupted, quickly.

"And if she furnish them?"

She was silent an instant, then she said: "Let it be so; do as you please."

With these words they ended the conversation; then arose, and retook the road to Saint Moritz. M. Moriaz scarcely had reached there, when he entered a carriage to drive to Cellarina, provided with a portfolio given him by Antoinette. He found M. Larinski busy strapping his trunks, and waiting for the mail-coach that made the journey between Samaden and Chur by the Col du Julier.

M. Moriaz expressed his regret at having missed his visit, and asked if he would consent to charge himself with a commission for his daughter, who desired to send to her godmother, Mme. de Lorcy, a sketch of Saint Moritz.

"Cheerfully," coldly replied Count Abel, and he promised, so soon as he reached Paris, to send the portfolio to Maisons Lafitte.

"Do better than that," rejoined M. Moriaz, "and carry your good-nature so far as to take it yourself to its address. Mme. de Lorcy is an amiable woman, who will be charmed to make your acquaintance, and hear from you of us."

The count bowed with a submissive air. There was so little ardour in this submission that M. Moriaz queried if his daughter had not been dreaming, if M. Larinski was as much in love with her as she fancied. He had not read the anonymous letter; Antoinette had refrained from even mentioning it to him.

He was returning to Saint Moritz, when he met midway a pedestrian, who, lost in thought, neither looked at him nor recognised him. M. Moriaz ordered the coachman to stop, sprang out of the carriage, went up to the traveller whom he seized by both shoulders, exclaiming:

"What, you! you again! I can go nowhere in Grisons without meeting you. I ask as I did at Chur, 'Where do you come from?'"

"Did you think I would stay there forever?" rejoined M. Camille Langis, reproachfully. "You have not kept your word, you have forgotten me; you did not write to me. I am tired of waiting, so here I am."

"And where are you going?"

"To the Hôtel Badrutt, to plead my own cause, because my advocate has failed me."

"Ah! you have chosen an excellent time," cried M. Moriaz; "you have a real genius for arriving in season. Go, hurry, plead, moan, weep,

entreat; you will be well received; you can come and tell me all about it."

"What do you mean?" asked Camille; "is it all over? Have you spoken, and did she silence you?"

"Not at all; she listened to me, without enthusiasm, it is true, but with attention and deference, when suddenly— Ah! my poor friend, how can it be helped? This sad world is full of accidents and Poles."

M. Langis looked at him in amazement, as if to ask for an explanation. M. Moriaz continued: "Do yourself justice. You are the most honest fellow upon earth, I grant; you are a charming man, and an engineer of the highest merit. But, unfortunately, there is no mystery of blood and tears in your existence; you are perfectly unpretending, frank, unaffected, and as transparent as crystal; in short, you are not a stranger. Had you a delicate, blond, and romantic mother, and do you wear her portrait on your heart? have you unfathomable green eyes? have you adventures to relate? have you visited California? have you swept the streets of San Francisco? have you exchanged bullets with the Cossacks? have you been killed in three combats and in ten skirmishes? I fear you have not even thought of

dying once. Have you tried all professions, without succeeding in one? have you invented a gun which burst? and, above all, are you as poor as a church-mouse? What! is it possible that you possess none of these fine advantages, and yet are audacious enough to ask me for my daughter's hand?"

M. Moriaz ended this harangue as the Samaden mail-coach passed. Count Abel, seated on the outside, bowed and waved his hand to them.

"Look well at that man," said M. Moriaz to Camille, "for he is the enemy."

And then, instead of giving him the remaining information that the youth desired, he said:

"Go away and forget; it is the best thing that you can do."

"You do not know me yet," replied Camille. "I am obstinate, I fire to the last cartridge. I will follow your steps. Oh! don't be afraid, I will lie—deceive Antoinette; let her think that I have relinquished my claims. I shall pay her only a friendly visit; but my eyes hunger to see her, and I will see her."

The morning of the following day the enemy arrived at Chur, whence he proceeded to Berne. Deponent saith not why he failed to turn aside at Soleure, as he had expressed his intention of do-

ing, in order to pay tribute there to the memory of the great Kosciuszko. The facts of the case are, that from Berne he went direct to Lausanne, and that immediately on reaching there he hastened to the Saxon Casino. When he seated himself at the gaming-table, he experienced a violent palpitation of the heart. His ears tingled, his brain was on fire, and the cold sweat started out on his forehead. He cast fierce glances right and left; he seemed to see in his partner's eyes his past, his future, and Mlle. Moriaz life-size. Fortune made amends for the harshness she had shown him at Milan. After a night of anguish and many vicissitudes, at daybreak Count Abel had twenty thousand francs in his pocket. It was sufficient to pay his debts, which he was anxious to do, and to enable him to await without too much impatience the moment for executing his projects.

He left the casino, his face flushed and radiant; he was so joyful that he became tender and affectionate, and, had M. Guldenthal himself come in his way, he could have embraced him.

CHAPTER IV

Although he had said nothing about it to Mlle. Moriaz in narrating to her his voyages and Odysseys, Count Abel was already acquainted with Paris, having made several long sojourns there. This may seem improbable. Gone in his early youth to America, he had not recrossed the ocean until he returned to fight in Poland; since then he had lived in Roumania and Vienna. Where, then, had he found time to visit France? Certain it is, however, that he was at home on the boulevard, and that he knew well the streets that led to the places where Paris amuses itself; but he had no thoughts now for amusements. Notwithstanding the fact that his purse was full, he proposed to live a retired and austere life. He found suitable apartments in one of the lodging-houses of Rue Mont-Thabor. These apartments, on the fifth floor, were pleasant but modest; they consisted of two rooms having a view of the chestnut-trees in the garden of the Tuileries. The portress was a nice woman, whose good-will

Count Abel gained on the very first day. He considered it useful, in the affairs of this world, to be at peace with both conscience and portress.

After getting installed in his garret his first care was to write to M. Moses Guldenthal. He informed him that he was ready to refund interest and capital, and he commissioned him to pay off some trifling debts that he had left in Vienna; he also desired him to send him the bracelet, which he hoped to make use of. He felt a genuine relief in the thought that he owed no man anything, that his condition was clear and transparent. When a man is proud he likes to be out of debt, and when he is clever he foresees all possible contingencies. His second care was to go to the Passage de l'Opéra and buy a bouquet for sixty francs, which he carried to No. 27 Rue Mouffetard. He had one of those memories that retain everything and let nothing escape them. This bouquet—the most beautiful that Mlle. Galet ever had received—caused her great astonishment. She did not know to whom to attribute it, the modest donor having escaped from the effusions of her gratitude by not making himself known. She supposed that Mlle. Moriaz had sent it to her, and, as she had taste for composition, she wrote to her a four-page letter of thanks.

Count Abel had not forgotten that he was the bearer of a commission from Mlle. Moriaz. A few days after his arrival, he decided to go to Maisons, but to take the longest route there; he wanted to see Cormeilles in passing, and a certain villa in which he was particularly interested. He went in the Argenteuil cars, got out at Sannois, climbed that pretty hill that commands the loveliest of views, and stopped at the inn of Trouillet Mills in order to breakfast there. The morning was charming—it was in the middle of August—and the approach of autumn was already felt, which enhances the beauty of all things. The sky was flecked with small gray clouds; a light, silvery mist hung on the brow of the hills; in two places the Seine appeared glittering in the sunshine. Abel breakfasted in the open air; while eating he gazed on the sky and on the great garden-plain extending at his feet, covered with vegetables, grape-vines, and asparagus, interspersed with fruit-trees. The wooded hills bordering it formed an admirable frame. In his present mood Count Larinski was charmed with the landscape, which was at once grand and smiling. Then he questioned himself as to how much a bed of asparagus would yield at the gates of Paris, and, having finished his calculation, he surveyed with the eye

of a poet the heather and broom that surrounded him. He decided that the Sannois Hill is more beautiful than Koseg; and indeed it is not necessary to be in love with Mlle. Moriaz to hold that opinion.

After having had a good breakfast, he again set out, following the crest of the hill and going through the woods. As he approached Cormeilles, he saw in the distance, beyond a grove of oaks, the white walls of a pretty villa. His heart beat faster, and by a sort of divination he said within himself, "That must be it." He inquired; he had made no mistake. Five minutes later he stood before a railing, through which he saw a green lawn. At the entrance of the porter's lodge a woman sat knitting.

"Can you tell me where M. Moriaz lives?" asked Count Larinski.

"Here, monsieur," she replied; "but M. Moriaz is absent; he will not return for a month. If you have come from a distance, monsieur," she added, graciously, "perhaps you would like to rest awhile on the terrace. The view is beautiful."

This hospitable reception seemed a good omen, for, sensible as he was, he believed in presentiments and prognostics. He entered without waiting to be urged. When he had crossed the lawn he stood

facing two detached buildings, separated by a mass of verdure: to the right, an old summer-house, used from time immemorial for M. Moriaz's collections, laboratory, and library; to the left, a new two-story house, part stone, part brick, built in an elegant but unobtrusive style, without ornament or pretension, and flanked by a turret covered with ivy and clematis, which served for a dove-cote. The house was not a palace, but there was an air about it of well-being, comfort, and happiness. In looking at it you felt like saying, "The inmates here ought to be happy!" This was about what Count Abel said to himself; in fact, he could hardly refrain from exclaiming, "Dieu! how happy I shall be here!" The situation, the terrace, the garden, everything pleased him infinitely. It seemed to him that the air here was fresher, more delightful than elsewhere, that it was exhilarating in the extreme; it seemed to him that the grass on the lawn was greener than any grass he ever had seen before, that the flowers in the carefully tended borders exhaled an unusually delicious perfume. He espied an open window on the ground-floor. He drew near it; the room into which he gazed, full of *bric-à-brac* of exquisite choice, was Mlle. Moriaz's study. There was in the appearance of this little sanctuary, hung with white silken

drapery, and as elegant as the divinity whose favourite tarrying-place it was, something of purity, chastity, and maidenliness. It opened its windows to the fresh breezes and to the perfume of the flowers; but it seemed as if nothing could penetrate there that was coarse or suspicious; that the entrance was forbidden to all doubtful or malignant beings who might have a secret crime to hide, to all pilgrims through life who had travelled its highways and had brought hence dust and mud on the soles of their shoes. Strange to say, Count Abel experienced an attack of timidity and embarrassment. He felt that he was indiscreet; he averted his eyes and went away.

This impression was soon dispelled. He regained his assurance, and walked around the terrace twice, treading the gravel with the step of a conqueror, making it feel the full weight of his foot. He finally seated himself on a bench; he had the nonchalant attitude of a man who is at home. Five or six doves were billing and cooing on the ledge of the roof; he could readily understand that they were talking of him, and that they were saying, "Here he is—we have been waiting for him." A beautiful Angora cat, white as snow, with delicate nose and silky hair, came, arching her back and waving her bushy tail, from out a

grove, and advanced towards him. She examined him curiously an instant, rubbed herself against the bench, and then sat coquettishly at the feet of the intruder. He caressed her, saying: "You are as white and graceful as your mistress; you are an intelligent animal; you understand, my dear, that I come from her. Shall I tell you a secret? She loves Count Abel Larinski."

With these words he rose and left, after thanking the portress, who would have been extremely astonished had she been aware of the reflections that had just been occupying his mind. He went a short distance on the highway; then finding, to the right, a road that led to Cormeilles, he took it, but soon struck into a path that wound through the woods. He was sorry to leave a spot that spoke vividly to his heart, and even more so to his imagination. He seated himself on the turf, in the midst of a grove of oaks; around him stretched a blooming heath. Through an opening in the grove, he could see Saint-Germain, its forests, and the Seine glittering in the sunshine, with the two bridges of Maisons Lafitte spanning it with their arches. Through another opening he caught a glimpse, to his left, of the proud bastions of Mont-Valérien, and, in the distance, Paris, the Arc de l'Étoile, the gilt dome of the Invalides, and the

smoke of the factories rising slowly in the air, then by turns remaining stiff and motionless, or being swept away by the wind.

The place was retired, solitary, very still. No sound was to be heard save the singing of a lark, and at intervals the melancholy cry of a peacock. Abel Larinski was overcome by a mysterious emotion; he felt a voluptuous languor steal through his veins. He watched the smoke over Paris, and he saw floating in it an ethereal form whose face was partly concealed by a red hood. It smiled on him, and he read in this smile a promise of all the joys of the land of Canaan.

He turned away his eyes, partially closing them, and there appeared another form to him—in truth, very different from the first. It was that of a man whom he had known intimately, of a man whom he had deeply loved. In vain the lark sang aloud, in vain the peacock wailed—Abel Larinski no longer heard them. He was thinking of a certain Samuel Brohl; he was reviewing in his mind all the history of this Samuel, a man who never had had a secret from him. This history was quite as sad a one as that of Abel Larinski, but much less brilliant, much less heroic. Samuel Brohl prided himself neither on being a patriot nor a paladin; his mother had not been a noble

woman with the smile of an angel, and the thought never had occurred to him of fighting for any cause or any person. He was not a Pole, although born in a Polish province of the Austrian Empire. His father was a Jew, of German extraction, as indicated by his name, which signifies a place where one sinks in the mire, a bog, swamp, or something of that nature; and he kept a tavern in a wretched little market-town near the eastern frontier of Galicia—a forlorn market-town, a forlorn tavern, a forlorn tavern-keeper. Although always on the alert to sell adulterated brandy to his neighbour, and to seize the opportunity to lend him money on usury, he did not thrive: he was a coward of whose timidity every one took advantage to make him disgorge his ill-gotten gains. His creed consisted in three doctrines: he firmly believed that the arts of lying well, of stealing well, and of receiving a blow in the face without apparently noticing it, were the most useful arts to human life; but, of the three, the last was the only one that he practised successfully. His intentions were good, but his intellect deficient. This arrant rogue was only a petty knave that any one could dupe.

Abel Larinski transported himself, in thought, to the tavern in which Samuel Brohl had spent his first youth, and which was as familiar to him

as though he had lived there himself. The smoky hovel rose before him: he could smell the odour of garlic and tallow; he could see the drunken guests—some seated round the long table, others lying under it—the damp and dripping walls, and the rough, dirty ceiling. He remembered a panel in the wainscoting against which a bottle had been broken, in the heat of some dispute; it had left a great stain of wine that resembled a human face. He remembered, too, the tavern-keeper, a little man with a dirty red beard, whose demeanour was at once timid and impudent. He saw him as he went and came, then saw him suddenly turn, lift the end of his caftan and wipe his cheek on it. What had happened? An insolvent debtor had spit in his face; he bore it smilingly. This smile was more repulsive to Count Abel than the great stain that resembled a human face.

"Children should be permitted to choose their fathers," he thought. And yet this poor Samuel Brohl came very near living as happy and contented in the paternal mire as a fish in water. Habit and practice reconcile one even to dirt; and there are people who eat and digest it. What made Samuel Brohl think of reading Shakespeare? Poets are corrupters.

The way it happened was this Samuel had

picked up, somewhere, a volume which had dropped from a traveller's pocket. It was a German translation of *The Merchant of Venice.* He read it, and did not understand it; he reread it, and ended by understanding it. It produced a wild confusion of ideas in his mind; he thought that he was becoming insane. Little by little, the chaos became less tumultuous; order began to reign, light to dawn. Samuel Brohl felt that he had had a film over his eyes, and that it was now removed. He saw things that he never had seen before, and he felt joy mingled with terror. He learned *The Merchant of Venice* by heart. He shut himself up in the barn, so that he might cry out with Shylock: "Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" He repeated, too, with Lorenzo:

> "Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.
> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins:
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

Samuel sometimes rose at night to watch the heavens, and he fancied he heard the voices of the "young-eyed cherubins." He dreamed of a world where Jessicas and Portias were to be met, of a world where Jews were as proud as Shylock, as insolent as Shylock, as vindictive as Shylock, and, as Shylock, ate the hearts of their enemies for revenge. He also dreamed, poor fool, that there was in Samuel Brohl's mind or bosom an immortal soul, and that in this soul there was music, but that he could not hear it because the muddy vesture of decay too grossly closed it in. Then he experienced a feeling of disgust for Galicia, for the tavern, for the tavern-keeper, and for Samuel Brohl himself. An old schoolmaster, who owned a harpsichord, taught him to play on it, and, believing he was doing good, lent him books. One day, Samuel modestly expressed to his father a desire to go to the gymnasium at Lemberg to learn various things that seemed good to him to know. It was then that he received from the paternal hand a great blow, which made him see all the stars of heaven in broad daylight. Old Jeremiah Brohl had taken a dislike to his son Samuel Brohl, because he thought he saw something in his eyes that seemed to say that Samuel despised his father.

"Poor devil!" murmured Count Abel, picking up a pebble and tossing it into the air. "Fate owes him compensation, it has dealt so roughly with him thus far. He fell from the frying-pan into the fire; he exchanged his servitude for a still worse slavery. When he left the land of Egypt, he fancied he saw the palms of the promised land. Alas! it was not long before he regretted Egypt and Pharaoh! Why was not this woman Portia? why was she neither young nor beautiful?" And he added: "Ah! old fairy, you made him suffer!"

It seemed to Count Larinski that this woman, this ugly fairy who had made Samuel Brohl suffer so much, stood there, before him, and that she scanned him from head to foot, as a fairy, whether old or young, might scan a worm. She had an imperious, contemptuous smile on her lips, the smile of a czarina; so Catharine II smiled, when she was dissatisfied with Potemkin, and said to herself, "I made him what he is, and to-morrow I can ruin him." "Yes, it was she, it was surely she," thought Count Larinski. "I cannot mistake. I saw her five weeks ago, in the Vallée du Diable; she made me tremble!"

This woman who had taken Samuel Brohl from out the land of Egypt, and had showered

attentions upon him, was a Russian princess. She owned an estate in Podolia, and chance would have it that one day, in passing, she stopped at the tavern where young Samuel was growing up in the shadow of the tabernacle. He was then sixteen. In spite of his squalid rags, she was struck by his figure. She was a woman of intelligence, and had no prejudices. "When he is well washed and cared for," she thought, "when he is divested of his native impurities, when he has seen the world and had communication with honest people, he certainly will be a noble fellow." She made him talk, and found him intelligent; she liked intelligent men. She made him sing, assured herself that he had a voice; she adored music. She questioned him; he told her all his misery, and while he talked she said to herself: "No, I do not mistake; he has a future before him; in two or three years he will be superb. Three years is not long: the gardener who grafts a young tree is often condemned to wait longer than that." When he had ended his narrative, she told him that she was in want of a secretary, that she had had several, but that she had soon tired of them, on account of their not having the desired qualifications; she asked him if he would like to accept the position. He replied only by

pointing his finger to his father, who was smoking his pipe on the door-step. A moment later she was closeted with Jeremiah Brohl.

She at once proposed to him to buy his son; he dropped his arms in astonishment, then felt delighted and charmed. He declared, at first, that his son was not for sale; and then he insinuated that if ever he did sell him he would sell him dear; he was, according to his opinion, merchandise of the best quality, a rich and rare article. He raised his demands ridiculously; she exclaimed; he affirmed he could not put them lower, that he had his terms, and that he always sold at a fixed price. They disputed a long time; she was about to give up; he yielded, and they ended by making the transaction. She sent for Samuel and said to him: "My boy, you belong to me—I have bought you for cash. You are satisfied with the bargain, are you not?"

He was stupefied to learn that he had a commercial value; he never had suspected it. He wanted very much to know what he was worth; but the princess was discreet upon the subject, and desired that he should believe that he had cost her a fabulous sum. After reflection, he made his conditions; he stipulated that he should belong to himself for three years, which time he

would employ in study and in satisfying a multitude of curious longings.

She readily consented, as that had been her own intention: it would take fully three years before the fruit was ripe and ready to be served at the princely table. She gave him instructions and advice, all bearing the stamp of a superior mind; she understood the world, the state of public affairs, and physiology, all that can be learned, and all that cannot be learned. Thus Samuel Brohl set out, his pocket well filled, for the University of Prague, which he soon left to settle at Heidelberg, whence he went to Bonn, then to Berlin, then to Paris. He was restless, he did not know what he wanted, but wherever he went he studied semiquavers, naturals, and flats; it was part of the conditions.

The princess was herself a great traveller; two or three times a year Samuel Brohl received a visit from her. She questioned him, examined him, felt him, as we feel a peach to be certain it is ripe. Samuel was very happy; he was free, he enjoyed his life, he did as he pleased. One single thing spoiled his happiness; when he looked in the glass, he would sometimes say within himself: "These are the features of a man who is sold, and the woman who bought him is neither young nor

beautiful." Several times he determined to learn a trade, so that he might be in a position to refund the debt and break the bargain. But he never did. He was both ambitious and idle. He wanted to fly at once; he had a horror of beginnings of apprenticeships. His early education had been so neglected that in order to recover lost time he would have been compelled to study hard—all the more so because, although he was quick-witted, and had a marvellous facility for entering into the thoughts of others, his own stock was poor; he had no ideas of his own, nor individuality of mind. He possessed a collection of half-talents; even in music, he was incapable of originating; when he attempted to compose, his inspirations proved mere reminiscences. He did himself justice; he felt that, strive as he might, his half-talents never would aid him to secure the first position, and he disdained the second. In fact, what he most needed was will, which, after all, makes the man. He tried to fling himself from his horse, which carried him where he did not desire to go; but he felt that his feet held firm in the stirrup; he had not strength to disengage them, and he remained in the saddle. Not being able to be a great man, he abandoned himself to his fate, which condemned him to be only

a knave. At the expiration of his term of freedom, he declared himself solvent, and the princess took possession of her merchandise.

"Yes, poets are corrupters," thought Count Abel Larinski. "If Samuel Brohl never had read *The Merchant of Venice*, or *Egmont*, a tragedy in five acts, or Schiller's ballads, he would have been resigned to his new position; he would have seen its good sides, and would have eaten and drunk his shame in peace, without experiencing any uncomfortable sensations; but he had read the poets, and he grew disgusted, nauseated. He was dying with desire to get away, and the princess suspected it. She kept him always in sight, she held him close, she paid him quarterly, shilling by shilling, his meagre allowance. She said to herself: 'So long as he has nothing, he cannot escape.' She mistook; he did escape, and he was so afraid of being retaken that for some time he hid like a criminal, pursued by the police. He fancied that this woman was always on his track. It was then, for the first time, that he felt hunger, for they eat in the land of Egypt. He lived by all sorts of expedients, and cursed the poets. One day he learned that his father was dead; he hastened to the old tavern in order to succeed to the inheritance. He was not aware

that for two years old Jeremiah Brohl had been in his dotage, and that his debtors mocked him while devouring his substance. A fine inheritance! it was diminished to two or three rickety chairs, four cracked walls that scarcely could stand upright, and some jewellery concealed in a hiding-place that Samuel knew of. Old Jeremiah never had been able to dispose of it for the price he required, and he preferred to keep it rather than lower his charge. He had principles, which was well for Samuel, as the jewellery was useful to him. He sold a necklace, and set out for Bucharest, some one having told him that he certainly would make his fortune there. He gave music-lessons; this wearisome profession did not suit him, he could not endure the constraint and the regular hours. The boys plagued him—he would willingly have wrung their necks; the girls treated him like a dog—they never thought of his being handsome, because they suspected him of being a Jew. Why had he gone to Bucharest—a city where all Germans are Jews, and where Jews are not considered men? Although he had earned a little money, he grew melancholy, and he began to think seriously of killing himself."

Count Abel Larinski leaned forward, plucked a spray of heather, tickled his lips with it, and

began to laugh; then, striking his breast, he said, in an undertone, "Thank God, Samuel Brohl is not dead, for he is here!"

He spoke the truth: Samuel Brohl was not dead, and life was of value to him, since he had met Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz in the cathedral in Chur. It was Samuel Brohl who had come to Cormeilles, and who was seated, at this moment, in the midst of a grove of oaks. Perhaps the lark that he had heard singing a quarter of an hour before had recognised him, for it had ceased singing. The peacock continued its screaming, and its doleful cries sounded like a warning. Yes, the man seated among the heather, employed in narrating his own history to himself, was indeed Samuel Brohl, and the proof of this was that he had laughed, and that Samuel Brohl did laugh sometimes, while Count Abel Larinski never laughed; moreover, for four years the latter had been out of the world. The second reason is, perhaps, the better.

He whom, with or without his consent, we shall call henceforth Samuel Brohl, reproached himself for this access of levity, as he would have reproached himself for a false note that had escaped him in executing a Mozart sonata. He resumed his grave, dignified air, in order to salute

with a wave of his hand the phantom that had just appeared before him. It was the same that he had summoned one evening at the Hôtel Steinbock, and treated there as an addle-brain, as a visionary, and even as an imbecile; but this time he gave him a more indulgent and gracious reception. He bore him no ill-will, he wished him well, he was under essential obligations to him, and Samuel Brohl was no ingrate.

"Ah! well, my poor friend, I am here," he said, in that mute language that phantoms understand. "I have taken your place, and almost your form; I play your part in the great fair of this world, and, although your noble body has rested for four years, six feet underground, thanks to me you still live. I always have had a most sincere admiration for you. I considered you a phenomenon, a prodigy. You were courageous, devoted, generosity itself; you esteemed honour above all the gold deposits in California; you detested all coarse thoughts and doubtful actions; your mother had nourished you in all sublime follies. You were a true chevalier, a true Pole, the last Don Quixote in this age of sceptics, plunderers, and interlopers. Blessed be the chance that made us acquainted! You lived retired, solitary, unknown, in a miserable hovel just outside of Bu-

charest. So goes the world! You were in hiding —you who had nothing to hide from either God or man—you who deserved a crown. Alas! the Russian Government had the poor taste not to appreciate your exploits, and you feared that it would claim and obtain your extradition. At our first meeting I pleased you, and you took me into your friendship; I spoke Polish, and you loved music. I became your intimate friend, your sole companion, your confidant. You must grant that you owe to me the last happy moments of your short existence. I soon knew your origin, the history of your youth, of your enterprises, and of your misfortunes. You initiated me into the secret of the great invention that you had just made; you explained to me in detail the mechanism of your famous gun. I was intelligent; I understood, or thought I understood. This gun, you said, would one day make my fortune, for, on your own account, you had renounced all hope; you had heart-disease, and you knew that you were condemned to a speedy end. My imagination was kindled. Through my entreaty you decided to leave with me for Vienna. This expedition was fatal to you, but I swear to you I did not foresee it."

Samuel crossed his hands on his knee; then he

continued: "May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, may my blood cease to flow in my veins, may the marrow dry up in my bones, if ever I forget to be grateful for what I owe to you, Abel Larinski, or cease to remember the forlorn hovel in which we passed that first night of our journey! You were attacked by suffocation. You had only time to call and wake me. I hastened to you. You gave me, in a dying voice, your last instructions. You delivered into my hands your last fifty florins, which were as acceptable as an orange would have been to the shipwrecked passengers of the Medusa. Then you pointed with your finger to a box, in which were inclosed family relics, letters, your journal, and papers. You said: 'Destroy all that; Poland is dead, let no one remember that I have lived!' After that you breathed your last. Well! I confess that I did not fulfil your orders. I kept your mother's portrait, the papers, all; and, in announcing your decease to the police, I made them believe that the man who was dead was named Samuel Brohl, and that Count Larinski still lived. What would you have me do? The temptation was too great. Samuel Brohl had disgraceful antecedents, he was base-born, he had been sold; there was a stain on his past that never could be wiped away, and, as

he had had the misfortune to read the poets, it had come about that he often despised himself. It was, indeed, time that he should be thrown into the shade, and my joy was extreme to know that he was dead, and to feel that I was alive. As soon as I succeeded in persuading myself that I was indeed Count Abel Larinski, I was as happy as a child whose parents have dressed him in new clothes, and who struts about to show them. With your name I acquired a noble past; in thought, I roamed through it with delight; I visited its every nook and corner, as a poor devil would make the circuit of a park that he has just come to inherit. You bequeathed me your relations, your adventures, your exploits. When you fought for your country, I was there; when you received a gunshot-wound near Dubrod, it was into my flesh that the bullet penetrated. Of what do you complain? Between friends is not everything in common? I left my own skin, I entered yours; I was satisfied there, and desired to remain. To-day I resemble you in everything; I assure you that if we were seen together it would be difficult to tell us apart. I have assumed your habits, your manners, your language, the poise of your head, your playful melancholy, your pride, your opinions, all, even to the colour of your hair and your handwriting. Abel

Larinski, I have become you: I mistake, I am more Pole, more Larinski, than you were yourself."

At this moment Samuel Brohl had a singular expression of countenance; his gaze was fixed. He was no longer of this world—he conversed with a spirit; but he was neither terrified nor awed, as was Hamlet in talking to the shade of his father. He treated familiarly the shade of the true Abel Larinski; it was precisely as we treat a partner that has transacted business with us in the same firm.

"It is very true, my dear Abel," he continued, "that the principle of partnership accomplishes wonders; one man alone is a small affair. But, of all partnerships, the most useful and convenient is the one that we have made together. The living and the dead can render each other important services, and they never quarrel. You should be satisfied; you play a fine rôle; you are the signature of the house. We will not speak of your gun; that was a poor speculation, for which I scarcely can pardon you. It was the fault of your disordered brain that we wandered off on that bypath, but, thanks be to Heaven! we have at last gained the highway. Five weeks ago we met a woman, and what a woman!

She has velvety-brown eyes, whence glances well forth like fresh and living waters. To praise her grace properly, I must borrow the language of the 'Song of Solomon': 'Thy lips, O my spouse! drop as the honey-comb; honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. This thy stature is like to a palm-tree. Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse: a spring shut up —a fountain sealed.' Some day she will cry out, with the Shulamite, 'Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.' She belongs to us, my dear Larinski—my dear partner; she has yielded, and you and I share the honour of the victory. I presented myself before her, and my presence did not displease her. I related to her your history, as you would have related it yourself, with delicacy and simplicity, neither adding nor omitting. Her heart was touched; her heart was taken captive. You will wed her—she will bear your name; but you will marry her by proxy, and I shall be your proctor. I promise to consider myself your mandatory, or, to express it better, you will own the property and I will have the usufruct. Never fear that I shall forget what I owe to you, or the modesty proper to my estate."

At these words, he made a grand gesture, as if to banish the phantom that he had conjured up, and that fled away trembling with sorrow, shame, and indignation. The peacock cried anew a mournful shriek. "Stupid bird!" thought Samuel Brohl, quaking with sudden dread.

He looked at his watch, and reflected that the hour was advancing—that he was losing time with the spirits. He rose hastily, and wended his way toward Cormeilles; thence he wished to come upon a sunny path that led to the banks of the Seine, and Sartrouville, the belfry of which was plainly visible. When he reached the foot of the declivity, he turned his head and saw, on the summit of the hill, through the space left by the crooked branches of two plantains, a white wall, that seemed to laugh amid the verdure, and a little higher the pointed roof of the dove-cote, where Mlle. Moriaz's doves had their nests. He did not need to look long at this roof to recognise it. He threw a burning kiss in the air—a kiss that was sent to the doves as well as to the dove-cote—to the house as well as to the woman—to the woman as well as the house. For the first time in his life, Samuel Brohl was in love; but Samuel Brohl's love differed from Abel Larinski's. When they

adore a woman, be she as beautiful as a picture, the frame, if it is a rich one, pleases them as much as the painting; and they propose to possess their mistress with all her appendages and appurtenances.

CHAPTER V

Mme. de Lorcy was a woman of about fifty years of age, who still possessed remains of beauty. She had been a widow for long years, and never had thought of marrying again. Although her wedded life had been a happy one, she considered that liberty is to be prized above all else; she employed hers in a most irreproachable manner. She was self-possessed, even better acquainted with numbers than with dress, and managed her property herself, which was by no means a trifling thing to do. Liking to make good use of her time, she thought to do it by busying herself in the affairs of others. She had a real vocation for the profession of a consulting lawyer. Usually her advice was sensible and judicious—nothing better could be done than to follow it; only her clients complained that she pronounced her sentences with too little tenderness, without granting any appeal. She was good, charitable, but lacked unction, and she had no sympathy with the illusions of others. A German poet, in making his

New-Year offerings, wishes that the rich may be kind-hearted, that the poor may have bread, that the ladies may have pretty dresses, that the men may have patience, that the foolish may get a little reason, and that sensible people may grow poetic. Mme. de Lorcy was kind-hearted, she had pretty dresses and a great deal of reason; but her reason was wanting in poetry, and poetic people to whom she gave advice required a good deal of patience to listen to the end. Those who permitted themselves to despise her counsel, and who were happy after their own fashion, incurred her lasting displeasure. She obstinately asserted to them that their seeming happiness was all a deceit; that they had fastened a stone about their necks; and that, without appearing to do so, at the bottom of their hearts they bitterly repented. She added, "It is not my fault; I told you, but you would not believe me."

Mme. de Lorcy had an almost maternal affection for her nephew, M. Camille Langis. Confident that he could not be otherwise than successful in a love-affair, she promised him that he should marry Mlle. Moriaz. To be sure, he was rather young; but she had decided that the question of age made no difference, and that in all else there was a perfect fitness between the parties.

M. Langis hesitated a long time about declaring himself. He said to Mme. de Lorcy: "If she refuse me, I shall no longer be able to see her; and so long as I can see her, I am only half-wretched." It was Mme. de Lorcy who forced him to draw his sword and open the campaign, in which she was to act as second. This campaign had not been a successful one. Deeply wounded at the refusal, which she had in vain attempted to prevent, she was ready to force Mlle. Moriaz into compliance. They made her believe, to pacify her, that the sentence was not definite, or at least that a period of grace would be granted to the condemned. M. Langis set out for Hungary, and he had now returned. In the mean time, Antoinette had refused two offers. Mme. de Lorcy had inferred this to be a favourable omen for her projects. Thus she felt annoyance mingled with anger on receiving the following letter from M. Moriaz:

"Dear Madame:

"You will be charmed to learn that I am extremely well. My cheeks are full, my complexion florid, my legs as nimble as a chamois, my appetite like that of an ogre. If ever you become anæmic, which God forbid, you should set out

forthwith for Saint Moritz, and I shall soon have good news from you. Saint Moritz is a place where you find what you want, but you find, besides, what you do not want. I do not speak of bears; I have not seen any, and should I meet one, I am strong enough to strangle it. Besides, bears are taciturn animals, they never relate their histories, and the only animals I fear are those that have the gift of narrating, and that one is not allowed to strangle. I will say no more. Have I made myself intelligible? You are so intelligent!

"Apropos, Antoinette sends you a sketch or a painting, I do not know which, that will be handed to you by Count Abel Larinski. He is a Pole, of that there can be no doubt; you will perceive it at once. I wish him well; he was obliging enough to extricate me from a breakneck position into which I had foolishly thrust myself. That I have a pair of legs to walk on, and a hand to write with, I owe to him. I recommend him to your kind reception, and I beg you to get him to relate his history. He is one of those who narrate, not every day, it is true, but when you touch the right spring, he starts, and cannot be stopped. Seriously, M. Larinski is no ordinary man; you will find pleasure in his acquaintance. I have dis-

covered that he is in rather embarrassed circumstances. He is the son of an emigrant, whose property has been confiscated. His father was a half fool, who made great attempts to cut a channel through the Isthmus of Panama, and never succeeded in cutting his way through anything. He was himself beginning to earn money in San Francisco, when, in 1863, he gave everything up to go and fight against the Russians. This enthusiastic patriot has since adopted the calling of an inventor, in which he has been unsuccessful; he is now in search of a livelihood. Do not think he will ask for anything; he is an hidalgo; he wraps himself proudly in his poverty, as a Castilian does in his cloak. I am interested in him; I want to assist him, give him a lift; but, first, I wish to feel sure that he is really worthy of my sympathy. Examine him closely, sift him well; I trust your eyes rather than my own; I have the greatest faith in your skill in this kind of valuation.

"Antoinette sends you her most affectionate greetings. She adores Saint Moritz; you would think that she had found something here which had wrought a charm over her. For my own part, I am delighted to have recovered my appetite, my sleep, and all the rest, and yet I regret having come; can you reconcile that? Let me know as

soon as possible what you think of my Pole; but, pray do not condemn him unheard. No hasty decision, I entreat; an expert is bound not to be influenced by his prejudices, but to weigh his judgments as his words. Adieu, dear madame; pity me in spite of my full cheeks."

Mme. de Lorcy replied in these words, by return mail:

"You are indeed innocent, my dear professor, and your finesse is but too apparent; I could not help understanding. Is she, indeed, so foolish? I did not think her overwise; but here she astonishes me more than I would have believed. You can tell her, for me—or rather don't say anything to her; I will only speak to you, I am too angry to reason with her. I will see your Pole, I await him resolutely; but, in truth, I have seen him already. I am well acquainted with him, I know him by heart; I have no doubt that he is some impostor. I will examine him without prejudice, with religious impartiality. You are so good as to remind me that an expert suspends his judgment. I will hold my police force in reserve, and I will let you know before long what I think of your adventurer. Ah! yes, I do pity you, poor man. After all, however, you alone are to blame;

is it my fault that you did not know how to act? God bless you!"

At the time when Samuel Brohl, seated amid the heather, in an oak-grove, was conversing with phantoms, Mme. de Lorcy, alone in her *salon*, was occupied with her needlework, and her thoughts, which revolved in a circle, like a horse in a riding-school. She had for several days been expecting Count Abel Larinski's visit; she wondered at his want of promptness, and suspected that he was afraid of her. This suspicion pleased her. Several times she fancied she heard a man's step in the antechamber, at which she started nervously, and the rose-coloured strings of her cap fluttered on her shoulders.

Suddenly, while she was counting her stitches, with head bent down, some one entered without her perceiving it, seized her hand, and, devoutly kissing it, threw his hat on the table, and then dropped into a chair, where he remained motionless, with his legs stretched out, and his eyes riveted on the floor.

"Oh! It is you, Camille," exclaimed Mme. de Lorcy. "You come apropos. Well?"

"Well! yes, madame, that is it," replied M. Langis; "and you see before you the most un-

happy of men. Why is your pond dry? I want to fling myself into it head foremost."

Mme. de Lorcy laid down her embroidery, and crossed her arms. "So you have returned?" said she.

"Would to God I never had gone there! It is a land where poison is sold, and I have drunk of it."

"Don't abuse metaphors. You have seen her? What did you say to her?"

"Nothing, madame—nothing of what is in my heart. I made her believe that I had reflected, and changed my views; that I was entirely cured of my foolish passion for her; that I was simply making her a friendly visit. Yes, madame, I remained half a day with her, and during that half day I never once betrayed myself. I convinced her that the mask was a face. Tell me, conscientiously, have you ever read of a more heroic act in Plutarch's *Lives of Great Men?*"

"She herself, what did she say to you?"

"She was so enchanted, so delighted with the change, that she was dying to embrace me."

"She shall pay for it. And he, did you see him?"

"Just caught a glimpse of him, looked up to him as was befitting the humility of my position.

This fortunate man, this glorious mortal, was enthroned on the top of the mail-coach."

"Is he really so fascinating?"

"He has, I assure you, a certain look of deep profundity, and he bears his exploits inscribed on his brow. What am I, to contend against him! You must allow that I have the appearance of a school-boy. And yet, if I were to boast. This road in Transylvania for which I had the contract was by no means easy to construct. We had to cut through the solid rock, working in the air, suspended by ropes. This perilous labour so disheartened our workmen that some of them left us; to encourage the rest, I was slung up like them, and like them handled the pickaxe. One day, in the explosion of a charge a piece of stone struck the rope of one of my men with such violence that it cut it as clean in two as the edge of a razor would have done. The man fell—I believed him to be lost; by a miracle, his clothes caught in some brushwood, to which he succeeded in clinging. It was I who went to his assistance, and I swear to you that in this rescue I proved the strength of my muscles, and ran the risk twenty times of breaking my neck. The workmen had mistrusted me on account of my youth; from that day, I can assure you, they held me in respect."

"Did you relate this incident to Antoinette?"

"What would have been the use? With women it does not suffice to be a great man; you must have the look of one too." And Camille Langis cried out, clinching his hands: "Ah! madame, I entreat you, do you know where I can procure a Polish head, a Polish mustache, a Polish smile? Pray, where are these articles to be had, and what is their market price? I will not haggle! O women! what a set you are—plague on you!"

"And are aunts the same?" gravely asked Mme. de Lorcy.

He answered more calmly: "No, madame, you are a woman without an equal, and I name you every day in my prayers. You are my only resource, my consolation, my counsel. Do not refuse me your precious instructions! What ought I to do?"

Mme. de Lorcy gazed up at the ceiling for an instant, and then said: "Love elsewhere, my dear; abandon this foolish girl to her fate and her Pole."

He started and replied: "You demand what is impossible. I am no longer my own master; she has taken possession of me—she holds me. Love elsewhere? Can you think of it? I detest her—I curse her—but I adore her!"

She rejoined: "You should not use hyperbole any more than metaphors. Both are unsolid food. When you decide not to love, you will love no more."

"That supposes that I have several hearts to choose from. I never had but one, and that no longer belongs to me. So you refuse me your advice?"

"What advice would you have me give you before having seen M. Larinski—before having taken the measure of this hero?"

"What! you expect to see him?"

"I am waiting for him to call, and I am sorry he keeps me waiting."

"Seriously, will you receive this man?"

"I have been asked to examine him."

"I am lost, if you feel the need of hearing before condemning him. Our most sacred duty is to be resolutely unjust towards the enemies of our friends."

"Nonsense! I shall not be indulgent towards him."

"Do as you like; I have my plan."

"What is it?"

"I shall seek some groundless quarrel with this contraband, this poacher, and I will blow his brains out."

"A fine scheme, my dear Camille! And afterward, when you have killed him, you will have gained a great deal. Have you confidence in me? I have already begun to work for you. The Abbé Miollens, as you know, is well acquainted in the society of Polish emigrants; I have sent to him for information. I have also written to Vienna for intelligence concerning him. Antoinette is foolish in forming such an acquaintance, it must be admitted; but, in matters of honour, she is as delicate as an ermine in tending the whiteness of her robe; if there be in M. Larinski's past a stain no larger than a ten-sou piece, she will forever discard him. Let me act; be wise, do not blow out any one's brains. *Grand Dieu!* what would become of us, if the only way to get rid of people was by killing them?"

As she pronounced these words a servant entered, bearing a card on a silver salver. She took the card and exclaimed: "When you speak of the wolf— Here is our man!" She begged M. Langis to retire; he implored permission to remain, promising to be a model of discretion. She was insisting on his leaving, when Count Abel Larinski appeared.

Samuel Brohl had scarcely taken three steps in Mme. de Lorcy's *salon* before he conjectured why

M. Moriaz had asked him to go there, and what was the significance of the commission with which he was charged. Notwithstanding the *salon* had a southern exposure, and that it was then the middle of the month of August, it seemed to him to be cold there. He thought that he felt a draught of chilly air, an icy wind, which pierced him through and through, and caused him an unpleasant shiver. He did not need to look very attentively at Mme. de Lorcy to be convinced that he was before his judge, and that this judge was not a friendly one; and, as soon as his gaze met that of M. Camille Langis, something warned him that this young man was his enemy. Samuel Brohl had the gift of observation.

He delivered his message, and handed Mme. de Lorcy the little portfolio that contained Mlle. Moriaz's painting, expressing his regret that business had prevented his coming sooner. Mme. de Lorcy thanked him for his kindness, with rather a cool politeness, and asked him for news of her goddaughter. He did not expatiate on this topic.

"The valley of Saint Moritz is a dreary country," she next said.

"Rather say, madame, that it is a dreary country possessing a great charm for those who love it."

"It appears that Mlle. Moriaz is almost wearied to death there. I should think she would die of ennui."

"Do you think her capable of yielding to ennui in any place?"

"Certainly, do not doubt it; but she has recourse to her imagination to dispel the tedium. She has a marvellous talent for procuring herself diversion and for varying her pleasures. Hers is an imagination having many relays: no sooner is one horse exhausted than there is another to take its place."

"That is a precious gift," he replied, briefly. "I assure you, however, that you calumniate the Engadine. The trees there are not so well grown as those in your park; but the Alpine fir and pine have their beauty."

"You went to this hole for your health, monsieur?"

"Yes, and no, madame. I was not ill, but my physician contended that I should be still better if I breathed the air of the Alps for three weeks. It was taking a cure as a preventive."

"M. Larinski made the ascent of Morteratsch," said Camille, who, seated on a divan with his arms extended on his knees, never had ceased to look at Samuel Brohl with a hard and hostile glance.

"That is an exploit that can be performed only by well people."

"It is no exploit," replied Samuel; "it is a work of patience, easy for those who are not subject to vertigo."

"You are too modest," rejoined the young man. "Had I done as much, I would sound a trumpet."

"Have you attempted the ascent?" asked Samuel.

"Not at all. I do not care about having feats of prowess to relate," he replied, in an almost challenging tone.

Mme. de Lorcy hastened to interrupt the conversation by saying, "Is this the first time you have been in Paris, monsieur?"

"Yes, madame," replied Samuel, who withdrew more and more into his shell.

"And does Paris please you as much as a pine-grove?"

"Much more, madame."

"Have you any acquaintances?"

"None; and the truth is, I have no desire to make any."

"Why?"

"Shall I tell you my reason? I am not fond of breaking ice, and Poles complain that

there is nothing in the world so icy as Parisian coldness."

"That explains itself," cried Camille. "Paris, that is Paris proper, is a small city of a hundred thousand souls, and this small city is invaded, more and more, by strangers who come here to seek pleasure or fortune. It is but natural that Paris should protect itself."

"Parisians pride themselves on their penetration," replied Samuel. "It does not require much of it to distinguish an honest man from an adventurer."

"Ah! permit me," returned M. Langis, "that depends a good deal on practice. The most skillful are deceived."

Samuel Brohl rose and made a movement to leave. Mme. de Lorcy insisted on his sitting down again. She saw that she had made a bad beginning in the fulfilment of her office of examining magistrate, and of gaining the prisoner's confidence. Fearing that Camille, in spite of his promise, would spoil everything by some insult, she found a pretext to send him away; she begged that he would go and examine a pair of horses that were a recent acquisition.

As soon as he was gone, she changed her manner; she grew amiable, she endeavoured to re-

move the ill impression of her first welcome; she put Count Abel at his ease, who felt that the air lost its chilliness about him. Without appearing to do so, she made him undergo an examination —she asked him many questions; he replied promptly. Visitors came in; it was an hour before he took leave, after having promised Mme. de Lorcy to dine with her the next day.

She did not wait until then to write to M. Moriaz. Her letter was thus conceived:

"August 16, 1875.

"You recommend me to be impartial, my dear friend. Why should I not be? It is true that I have dreamed of a certain marriage: one of the parties would not listen to my propositions, and the other has abandoned the idea. My project has come to nothing. Camille has enjoined me never to speak of it to him again. You see I am no longer interested in the question, or, rather, I have in the matter no other interest than that which I feel for Antoinette, whose happiness is as dear to me as it is to you. Apropos, do not give her my letters; read to her the passages that you judge suitable to communicate to her—I leave that to your discretion.

"First of all, let me unfold to you my humble opinions. I am charged with having prejudices;

it is a shocking calumny. I will make you a profession of faith, and you shall judge. I am at war with more than one point of our French morals; I deplore the habit that we have formed of considering marriage as a business transaction, of esteeming it as a financial or commercial partnership, and making everything subordinate to the equality of the personal estates. This principle is revolting to me, my dear friend. We are accused in foreign countries of being an immoral people. Heavens! it seems to me that we understand and practise virtue quite as much as the English or Germans, and, to speak the whole truth, I am not afraid to advance the opinion that this, of all the countries of the universe, is the one where there is the most virtue. It is not at that point that we sin. Our misfortune is, that we are too rational in our habits of life, too circumspect, too prudent; we lack boldness in our undertakings; we wish, as it is said, to have one foot on firm land and the other not far off. We must have security; we do not like risk; doubtful affairs do not please us; we are too prone to look ahead, and to look ahead is to fear. That is one reason why we send out no colonies, and that is the reason we have no more children. Are you satisfied with me?

"Napoleon I was in the habit of saying that,

in fighting a battle, he so ordered matters as to have seventy chances out of the hundred in his favour; he left the rest to Fate. Ah! brave people, life is a battle, but the French of to-day will not risk anything. They are the most honest, the least romantic of men, and I regret it. Read Antoinette this passage of my letter. Our young people think that they have a right to the paternal fortune; they consider that their father is wanting in his duty if he does not leave them a settled position, a certain future. Their second preconceived notion is that they must find a wife who will bring them as much at least as they have to offer her. I have so much, you have so much—we are evidently created for each other; let us marry. All this is deplorable. I like better to hear of the young American who only expects from his parents the education necessary for a man to make his way; he has his tools given to him and the method of using them, but not a sou. You have learned to swim, my friend—swim. After that he marries, most frequently a woman who has nothing, and who loves to spend money. May the God Dollar protect him! he will gaily make an opening for himself in life, and his wife will give him ten children, who will follow the same course as their father. Where it is custom-

ary for hunger to marry thirst, there are happy marriages, and a hardy race of people. In all conscience, am I not romantic enough?

"Let me consider another case. Take a man who has fortune: he profits thereby to consult his heart only, and offer his name and revenues to the woman he loves and who has no dower. I clap my hands, I think it the best of examples, and I regret that it is so seldom practised among us. In France princes never are seen marrying shepherdesses; on the contrary, one too often sees penniless sons-in-law carrying off heiresses, and that is precisely the most objectionable case. In a romance, or at the theatre, the poor young man who marries a million is a very noble person; in life it is different. Not if the poor young man had a profession or a trade, if he could procure by his own work a sufficient income to render him independent of his wife; but if he submit to be dependent on her, if he expect from her his daily bread, if he resign himself to live in his wife's house, to roll in her carriage, to ask her for the expenses of his toilet, for his pocket-money, and perhaps for sundry questionable outlays—frankly, this young man lacks pride; and what is a man who has no pride? Besides, what surety is there that in marrying it is, indeed, the woman he is in

love with and not the dower? Who assures me that Count Abel Larinski?—I name no one, personalities are odious, and I own there are exceptions. *Dieu*, how rare they are! If I were Antoinette, I would love the poor, but in their own interest. I would not marry them. The interest of the whole human race is at stake. Beggars are inventive; let them have their own way to make, and they will be sure to invent some means of livelihood; give them the key of a cash-box, and they will cease to strive, you have destroyed their genius. My dear professor, in fifteen years I have brought about a great many marriages. Three times I have married hunger to thirst, and, thank God, I once decided a millionaire to marry a poor girl who had not a sou, but I never aided a beggar to marry a rich girl. Now you have my principles and ideas—Are you listening to me still? You fall asleep sometimes while listening to a sermon. Good! you open your eyes—I proceed:

"I have seen your man. Well, sincerely, he only half pleases me. I do not deny that he has a handsome head; a sculptor might use it as a model. I will add that his eyes are very interesting, by turns grave, gentle, gay, or melancholy. I have nothing to say against his manners or his language; his address is excellent, and he is no

booby—far from it. With all this there is something about him that shocks me—I scarcely know what—a mingling of two natures that I cannot explain. He might be said to resemble, according to circumstances, a lion or a fox; I believe that the fox-nature predominates, that the lion is supplementary. I simply give you my impressions, which I am perfectly willing to be induced to change. I am inclined to fancy that M. Larinski passed his first youth amid vulgar surroundings, that later he came into contact with good society, and being intelligent soon shook off the force of early influences; but there still remain some traces of these. While he was in my *salon* his eyes twice took an inventory of its contents, and that with a rapidity which would have done credit to a practised appraiser. It was then, especially, that he had the air of a fox.

"Nor is this all. I read the other day the story of a princess who was travelling over the world, and asked hospitality, one evening, at the door of a palace. Was she a real princess or an adventuress? The queen who received her judged it well to ascertain. For this purpose she prepared for her, with her own hands, a soft bed, composed of two mattresses, on which she piled five feather-beds; between the two mattresses she

slipped three peas. The next day the traveller was asked how she had slept. 'Very badly,' she replied. 'I do not know what was in my bed, but my whole body is bruised; I am black and blue, and I never closed my eyes until dawn!' 'She is a true princess,' cried the queen. Is M. Larinski a true prince? I made him undergo the test of the three peas. I allowed myself to question him with indiscreet, urgent, improper curiosity; he did not appear to feel the indiscretion. He replied promptly and submissively; he endeavoured to satisfy me, and I was not satisfied. I shall see him again to-morrow—he comes to dine at Maisons. I only wish to be able to prove to myself that he is a true prince.

"My dear professor, you are the most imprudent of men, and, whatever happens, you have only yourself to blame. People do not open their doors so easily to strangers. You tell me that, thanks to M. Larinski's kindness, you did not break your leg. Mercy on me! a father would better break his leg in three places than expose his daughter to the risk of marrying an adventurer; his leg could be easily set. There is nothing so frightful in that.

"*Postscriptum.*—I open my letter. I want to prove to you how much I desire to be just, and

how far my impartiality goes. You know that my neighbour, Abbé Miollens, lived a long time in Poland, and has correspondents there. I begged him to get me information concerning the count —of course, without explaining anything to him. He reports that Count Abel Larinski is a true count. His father, the confiscation of the property, the emigration to America, the Isthmus of Panama—all is true; the history is authentic. Countess Larinski was a saint. Concerning the son, nothing is known; he must have been three or four years old when he landed in New York. No one ever saw him; no one seems to know anything about his taking part in the insurrection of 1863. Having spoken the truth about his parents, it is to be presumed that he told the truth about himself. Very well, but one can fight for one's country, and have a saint for one's mother, and yet possess none of the qualities that go towards making a happy household. I take back the word adventurer, but I still hold to all I have said about him. Why did he take an inventory of my furniture with his eyes? Why did he sleep so soundly in a bed where there were three peas? This requires an explanation.

"Kiss Antoinette for me. Give my regards to Mlle. Moiseney, without telling her that I think

her a simpleton; it is a conviction in which I shall die. Was it, indeed, very difficult to descend from that terrible rock of yours?"

Three days later, Mme. de Lorcy wrote a second letter:

"August 19th.

"I have received this very moment, my dear monsieur, the reply from Vienna that I have been expecting, and which I hasten to share with you. I had applied to our friend Baron B——, first secretary of the embassy from France to Vienna, in order to try to learn what reputation Count Larinski had left there. He is esteemed there as a most worthy man; as an inventor who was more daring than wise; as a devoted patriot; as one of those Poles whose only thought is of Poland and of their Utopia, and who would set fire to the four corners of the earth without wincing, for the sole purpose of procuring embers at which to roast their chestnuts. I will not return to the subject of the gun; you know all about it. It seems that there was some good in this explosive gun, and that he who invented it united a sort of genius with ingenuousness, inexperience, and ignorance enough to make one weep. Nothing can be said against the private character of the man. He had

a few debts, and his tradespeople felt considerable anxiety when he left Vienna one morning on foot. He had no sooner reached Switzerland than he sent back money to settle everything. Here we have an admirable trait. However, his tastes were simple, and he led a steady life; it was the gun that brought his finances into disorder. I will add that M. Larinski visited in Vienna at several of the most distinguished houses, where he is remembered most kindly. He was sought everywhere on account of his talents as a musician, which were far more to be relied on than his talent as a gunsmith. He plays the piano to perfection, and has a very beautiful voice. Had he employed these talents, he could have made his way in the opera, but his dignity held him back. Now you know what has been communicated to me by Baron B——. On the faith of an honest woman, I have neither added nor omitted anything.

"I am going to astonish you. Would you believe that I am beginning to be reconciled to Count Larinski? What shocked me in him is explained and excused by his long residence in America. He is a mixed breed of Yankee and Pole. Far from having prejudices against him, I now have them in his favour. Do you know, I am by no means

sure that he cherishes in his heart any serious sentiment for your daughter? As a man of taste he admires her. I should like to know who would not admire her! I suspect Antoinette of allowing her imagination to become excited about nothing. He talks of her on all occasions in as free and tranquil a fashion as he would talk of a work of art. I find it impossible to believe that he is in love. I have in vain watched his green eyes. I never have seen a suspicious look.

"As I announced to you, he came to Maisons yesterday to dine. I had invited Abbé Miollens, and Camille had invited himself, promising that he would act like a philosopher; he only half kept his promise: for I must inform you that my nephew has conceived, I do not know why, an insurmountable antipathy to M. Larinski; he is subject to taking dislikes to people. During dinner, Abbé Miollens, who is a great linguist and a great traveller, and who has at the ends of his fingers everything concerning Poland and the Poles, led the conversation to the insurrection of 1863. M. Larinski, at first, refrained from discussing this sad subject; little by little the flood-gates were opened: he related his adventures or campaigns without boasting, praising others rather than himself; when suddenly his voice grew husky and his

eyes dim, he interrupted himself, and begged we would speak of other things. Fortunately, at this moment, he did not see Camille, whose lips wore a sinister smile. Young Frenchmen have become such sceptics! I made eyes at the bad boy, and on leaving the table I sent him to smoke a cigar in the park.

"I should confess to you that M. Larinski has made a conquest of Abbé Miollens, who of all men is the most difficult to please, and who disputes with Providence the privilege of fathoming the depths of the human heart. You are aware that the abbé is a remarkable violinist: he sent for his instrument; M. Larinski seated himself at the piano, and the two gentlemen played a concerto by Mozart—divine music performed by two angels of the first class. The conversation that followed charmed me more than the concerto. I do not know by what fatality we came to speak of marriage. I did not miss the opportunity to disclose, with a most innocent air, my little theories, with which you are acquainted. Would you believe that the count concurred, more than concurred, with my views? He is more royalist than the king; he does not admit that a good rule allows of any exception. According to him, a poor man who marries a rich woman forfeits his honour, de-

bases himself, sells himself; he is a man in bondage. He developed this theme with sombre eloquence. I assure you that the lion no longer bore resemblance to the fox.

"After the departure of this fine musician and great orator, Abbé Miollens, remaining alone with me, told me how much he was charmed with his conversation and manners; he could not cease to sing his praises. I think he went a little too far. However, I joined with him in regretting that a man of his merit should be reduced to live by expedients. The abbé's arm reaches a long way; he promised me that he would busy himself, at the expense of all other business, to find some employment for M. Larinski. He remembered that there was some talk of establishing in London an international school for the living languages. One of the founders of this institute had applied to him to learn if he could recommend some professor of the Slavonian languages. It would be exactly the thing, and I should be delighted to procure for your *protégé* an occupation that would insure all the happiness that it is possible to enjoy on the other side of the Channel. After this, will you still accuse me of being prejudiced against him?

"Adieu, my dear monsieur. Give my tender love to my amiable goddaughter. I rely on you

to read my letters to her with care and discretion. Little girls should have only a part of the truth."

Eight days afterward Mme. de Lorcy wrote a third letter, which was thus expressed:

"August 27th.

"I am more and more content with M. Larinski. I blame myself for the suspicions with which he inspired me. The Viennese were right to consider him a worthy man, and Abbé Miollens has not valued him too highly. You write, on your part, my dear friend, that you are not dissatisfied with Antoinette. She is gay, tranquil; she walks, paints, never speaks of Count Abel Larinski, and, when you speak to her of him, she smiles and does not reply. You claim that she has reflected; that time and absence have wrought their effect. 'Out of sight, out of mind,' you say. Take care! I am more mistrustful than you. Are you very sure that Antoinette may not be a sly-boots?

"What is certain is, that I received a charming epistle from her, in which there is no more mention of M. Larinski than if Poland and the Poles did not exist. She praises Engadine; she pretends that she would ask for nothing better than to end her days in a pine-forest. I can read be-

tween the lines that it would be a pine-forest after her own heart, where there would be reunions, balls, guests to dinner, small parties, a conservatory of music, and the opera. The last paragraph of her letter is devoted to the insurrection in Herzegovina, and it is hardly worth while to say that all her sympathies are with the insurgents. 'If I were a man,' she writes, 'I would go and fight for them.' That is very well; she always took the part of thieves against the police. I remember long ago —she was ten years old—I told her the story of an unfortunate traveller besieged in a forest by an army of wolves. He made a barricade about himself, and around it he lighted great fires. The wolves fell into the flames, where they roasted, one after the other. Antoinette began to weep bitterly, and I imagined that she was lamenting the terror of the unfortunate man. 'Not at all,' she cried; 'the poor beasts!' She was made so; we cannot remake her. She always will side with the wolves, especially with the lean ones who scarcely can make two ends meet.

"I told you that Count Larinski was a worthy man. He came to see me the day before yesterday. We have become very good friends. I asked him if Paris still pleased him, and he replied, with the most gracious smile, 'What I like

best in Paris is Maisons Lafitte.' Thereupon he said some exceedingly pretty things, which I will not repeat. We walked *tête-à-tête* around the park. Heaven be praised that I returned heart-whole! We talked politics; he bears the reputation of being hot-headed, but he is not wanting in good sense. I wished to know if he was in favour of the Turks or of the Bosnians. He replied:

"'As a Christian, as a Catholic, I am interested in the Christians of the East, and I am for the Cross against the Crescent.' He pronounced these words, Christian, Catholic, and cross, in a tone full of unction. I surmise that he is a devotee. He added, 'As a Pole, I am for Turkey.'

"'I believed,' said I, 'that the Poles had sympathy with all the oppressed.'

"'Poles,' he replied, 'cannot like those who like their oppressors, and they cannot forget that the Osmanlis are their natural allies, and, on occasions, their refuge.'

"I gave him Antoinette's letter to read. I was very glad, at any hazard, to prove to him that she could write four pages without asking after him. He read it with extreme attention; but when he came to the famous passage—'If I were a man, I would go and fight for them!'—he smiled,

and returned me the letter, saying, in a disdainful and rather a dry tone :

" 'Write for me to Mlle. Moriaz that I believe I am a man, yet that I will not fight for the Bosnians, and that the Turks are my greatest friends.'

" 'She is foolish,' I said. 'Fortunately, she changes her folly with every new moon!'

" 'What would you have?' he replied; 'in order not to be insipid, it is well to be a little foolish. My poor mother used often to say: "My son, youth should be employed in laying by a great store of extravagant enthusiasm; otherwise, at the end of life's journey the heart will be void, for much is left on the road."'

"Calm, *seigneur*, your excited fears, no one has designs on your daughter; we evidently find her charming, but are by no means in love with her. With much precaution and circumlocution I gently proceeded to question Count Larinski on the state of his affairs, about which he never has opened his mouth. He frowned. I did not lose courage. I offered him this place of professor of the Slavonian languages of which the abbé had again spoken. I saw in an instant that his sensitive pride had taken alarm. However, upon reflection, he softened, thanked me, declined my kind offer, and announced

—guess what! How much is my news worth? what will you give me for it? He announced, I tell you, that in two weeks—you understand me—he will return to Vienna, where he has been promised a post in the archives of the Minister of War. I did not dare to ask what was the salary; after all, if he is satisfied, it is not for us to be harder to please than he. When I affirm that Count Larinski is a good, worthy man!— In two weeks! you understand me perfectly.

"My dear friend, I am enchanted to know that the water of Saint Moritz and the air of the Engadine have entirely re-established your health; but do not be imprudent. Half-cures are fatal. Be careful not to leave Churwalden too soon, for the descent into the heavy atmosphere of the plains. Your physician, whom I have just seen, declares that, if you hasten your return he will not answer for the consequences. Antoinette, I am sure, will join her entreaties to ours. Do not let us see you before the end of three weeks! Follow my orders, my dear professor, and all will go well. Camille is about to leave; he has become insupportable. He had the audacity to assert to me that I was a good woman, but very credulous, which in my estimation is not very polite. He no longer acts as a nephew, and respect is dead."

Ten days later M. Moriaz received at Churwalden a fourth and last letter :

" September 6th.

" Decidedly my dear friend, Count Larinski is a delightful man, and I never will pardon myself for having judged ill of him. The day before yesterday I did not know the extent of his merit and of his virtues. His beautiful soul is like a country where one passes from one pleasing discovery to another, and at each step a new scene is revealed. Between ourselves, Antoinette is a dreamer : where has she got the idea that this man is in love with her ? These Counts Larinski have artists' enthusiasm, tender and sensitive hearts, and poetic imaginations ; they love everything, and they love nothing ; they admire a pretty woman as they admire a beautiful flower, a humming-bird, a picture of Titian's. Did I tell you that the other day, as I was showing him through my park, he almost fainted before my purple beech—which assuredly is a marvel ? He was in an ecstasy ; I truly believe there were tears in his eyes. I might have supposed he was in love with my beech ; yet he has not asked my permission to marry it.

" Moreover, if he were up to his eyes in love with your daughter, have no fear ; he will not

marry her, and this is the reason— Wait a little, I must go further back.

"Abbé Miollens came to see me yesterday afternoon; he was distressed that M. Larinski had not approved of his proposition.

"'The evil is not so great,' I said; 'let him go back to Vienna, where all his acquaintances are; he will be happier there.'

"'The evil that I see in it,' he replied, 'is that he will be lost to us forever. Vienna is so far away! Professor in London, only ten hours' journey from Paris, he could cross the Channel sometimes, and we could have our music together.'

"You can understand that this reasoning did not touch me in the least; whatever it cost me I will bear it, and resign myself to lose M. Larinski forever; but the abbé is obstinate.

"'I fear,' he said, 'that the Austrians pay their archivists badly; the English manage matters better, and Lord C—— gave me *carte blanche*.'

"'Oh! but that,' rejoined I, 'is a delicate point to touch. As soon as you approach the bread-and-butter question, our man assumes a rigid, formal manner, as if an attack had been made on his dignity.'

"'I truly believe,' he replied, 'that there is a

fundamental basis of incomparable nobility of sentiment in his character; he is not proud, he is pride itself.'

"The abbé is passionately fond of Horace; he asserts that it is to this great poet that he owes that profound knowledge of men for which he is distinguished. He quoted a Latin verse that he was kind enough to translate for me, and that signified something equivalent to the statement that certain horses rear and kick when you touch the sensitive spot. 'That is like the Poles,' he said.

"Meanwhile, M. Larinski entered, and I retained the two gentlemen to dinner. In the evening they again gave me a concert. Why was Antoinette not there? I fancied I was at the Conservatoire. Then we conversed, and the abbé, who never can let go his idea, said, without any reserve, to the count:

"'My dear count, have you reflected? If you go to London, we could hope to see you often; and, besides, the salary—well, as this terrible word has been spoken, listen to me; I will do all in my power to obtain conditions for you in every way worthy of your merit, your learning, your character, your position.'

"He was not permitted to finish the list; the count reared like the horse in Horace, exclaiming,

'O Mozart! what a horrid subject of conversation!' Then he added, gravely: 'M. l'Abbé, you are a thousand times too good, but the place offered to me in Vienna seems to me better adapted to my kind of ability; I would make, I fear, a detestable professor, and the salary, were it double, would in my opinion have but little weight.'

"The abbé still insisted. 'In our century,' said he, 'less than any other, can one live on air.'

"'I have lived on it sometimes,' replied the count, gaily, 'and I did not find it bad. My health is proof against accidents. Ah! where money is concerned, you have no idea how far my indifference goes. It is not a virtue with me, it is an infirmity; it is because of my nationality, because I am my father's son. I feel myself incapable of thinking of the future, of practising thoroughly French habits of economy. If my purse is full, I soon empty it; after which I condemn myself to privations—no, that does not express it—I enjoy them. According to me, there is no true happiness into which a little suffering does not enter. Besides, I have a taste for contrasts. At times I believe myself a millionaire, I have the pretensions of a nabob, I give full scope to my fancies; the next day, my bed is hard and I live on bread-and-water, and am perfectly happy. In short,

I am a fool once in the year, and a philosopher the rest of the time.'

"'The trouble is,' returned the abbé, 'that one day of folly will sometimes suffice to compromise forever the future of a philosopher.'

"'Oh, reassure yourself,' replied he; 'my extravagances never are very dangerous. There was method in Hamlet's madness, and there is always a little reason in mine.'

"While making this declaration of principles, he had seated himself at the piano, and idly began running his fingers over the keys. Suddenly he began to sing a German song, which I got Abbé Miollens to translate for me, and which is not long. The hero of the song is an amorous pine, standing on the summit of a barren mountain of the north. He is alone; he is weary; the snow and ice wrap him in a white mantle, and he spends his dreary hours of leisure in dreaming of a palm, which in days of yore he met, it seems, in his travels.

"M. Larinski sang this little melody with so much pathos that the good abbé was touched, and I became anxious. Anxiety, once felt, is apt to be constantly returning. I asked myself if he had met his palm in the Engadine, and added aloud, rather dryly: 'Is the day of your departure defi-

nitely fixed? will you not do us the favour of granting us a reprieve?'

"He executed the most pearly chromatic scale, and replied: 'Alas! madame, I am only deferring my departure on account of a letter that cannot be much longer delayed; in less than a week, I shall have the distress of bidding you farewell.'

"'You shall not leave,' said Abbé Miollens, 'without letting us hear once again the poem of the pine. You sang it with so much soul that it seemed to me you must be relating an episode of your own history. My dear count, did you ever chance to dream of a palm?'

"He answered: 'I have no longer the right to dream; I am no longer free.'

"The abbé started and cried out, in his simple-hearted way, 'Ah! what, are you married?'

"'I thought I had told you so,' replied he, with a melancholy smile, and he hastened to speak of a ballet that he had seen the evening before at the opera, and with which he was only half pleased.

"You can readily believe that when he pronounced the words, 'I thought I had told you so,' I was on the point of falling on his neck; I was so happy, that I was afraid he would read in my eyes my joy, astonishment, and profound grati-

tude. I think that he is very keen, and that he has conjectured for some time the mistrust with which he inspired me. If he wanted to mock me a little, I will pardon him; a good man unjustly suspected has a perfect right to revenge himself by a little irony. I ordered the horses to be put to my carriage to take him over to the railroad, and the abbé and I accompanied him as far as the station. There cannot be too much regard shown to honest people who have been abused by fortune.

"Well! what do you say, my dear friend? Was I wrong in claiming that M. Larinski is a delightful man? He will leave before the end of a week, and he is married, unhappily married, I fear, for his smile was melancholy. You see he may have married out of gratitude some *grisette*, some little working-woman, who nursed him through illness, one of those women who are not presentable; that would be thoroughly in character. Happily, in law there are no good or bad marriages; this one I hold to be unimpeachable.

"The reaction was violent: I am so rejoiced that I feel tempted to illuminate Cormeilles and Maisons Lafitte. In what way will you undeceive our dreamer? In your place I would use some precautions. Be prudent; go bridle in hand; and

in the future, believe me, climb no more among the rocks; you see what it may lead to.

"Once more, do not hasten your departure. We have had for some days stifling heat; we literally suffocate. You need to spend a fortnight longer amid the shade of the pine-trees, and four thousand feet above the level of the sea.

"Adieu, my dear professor! I am interrupted in my writing by the incredulous, the sceptical, the suspicious, the absurd, the ridiculous Camille, who respectfully recommends himself to your indulgent friendship."

CHAPTER VI

In reading the fourth letter of Mme. de Lorcy, M. Moriaz experienced a feeling of satisfaction and deliverance, over which he was not master. His daughter had gone to pay a visit in the neighbourhood, and he was alone with Mlle. Moiseney, who said to him, "You have received good news, monsieur?"

"It is excellent," he replied; then, promptly correcting himself, he added: "Excellent, or to be regretted, or vexatious; I leave that to your powers of discernment."

When he had finished reading the letter, and replaced it in the envelope, he remained thoughtful for some moments; he was wondering how he should proceed to announce the excellent news. For three weeks his daughter had been a mystery to him. She never once had pronounced the name of Count Larinski. Churwalden pleased her as much as Saint Moritz; apparently, she was gay, tranquil, perfectly happy. Had her delusion passed away? Had she changed her mind? M. Moriaz

did not know; but he surmised that still waters should be mistrusted, and that a young girl's imagination is like an abyss. One thoroughly good warning is worth two indifferent ones; henceforth, he feared everything. "If I speak to her," thought he, "I shall not be able to dissimulate my joy, and perhaps she will go into hysterics." He had a horror of hysterics; he resolved to have recourse to Mlle. Moiseney, and he said to her, abruptly:

"I suppose, mademoiselle, that you are acquainted with all that has passed, and that Antoinette has given you her confidence?"

She opened her eyes wide, and was on the point of answering that she knew nothing; but she restrained herself, and setting her little pointed head erect on her thin shoulders, she said, proudly, "Can you imagine that Antoinette would keep any secrets from me?"

"Heaven forbid!" replied he. "And do you approve, do you encourage her sentiments for M. Larinski?"

Mlle. Moiseney started; she had been far from suspecting that Count Larinski had specially impressed Mlle. Moriaz, and, as on certain occasions her mind worked rapidly, she understood immediately all the consequences of this prodigious

event. There was a cloud before her eyes, and in this cloud she beheld all manner of things, both pleasing and displeasing to her; her mouth open, she strove to clear her ideas. She said to herself: "It is an imprudent act; not only that, it cannot be;" but she also said: "Mlle. Antoinette can no more make a mistake than the Queen of England can; because she wishes it, she is right in wishing it." Mlle. Moiseney ended by regaining her self-possession; her lips formed the most pleasant smile, as she exclaimed:

"He has no fortune, but he has a beautiful name. Mme. la Comtesse Larinski! it sounds well to the ear."

"Like music; I grant, it is perfect," rejoined M. Moriaz. "Unfortunately, music is not everything in the affairs of this world."

She was not listening to him. Full of her own idea, without taking time to breathe: "You jest, monsieur," she continued, with extraordinary volubility. "Believe me or not, I have foreseen this marriage for some time. I have presentiments that never deceive me. I was sure that it would end thus. What a handsome couple! Fancy them driving in an open carriage through the park, or entering a proscenium-box at the opera! They will make a sensation. And truly, without

boasting, I think I may call your attention to the fact that I have been of some account in the affair. The first time I saw Count Larinski, you know, at the *table d'hôte* in Bergün, I recognised at once that he was beyond comparison——"

"By-the-way, he ate trout?" interrupted M. Moriaz; "it does honour to your discernment."

"You had better ask Antoinette," replied she, "if that very evening I did not praise the handsome stranger. She maintained that he stooped, and that his head was badly poised; would you believe it?—his head badly poised! Ah! I was sure it would end so. Do you wish to prove my discernment? Shall I tell you where your letter comes from that contains such excellent news? The count wrote it; he has at last proposed. I guessed it at once. Ah! monsieur, I sympathize in your joy. He is, indeed, the son-in-law that I have dreamed of for you. A superior man, so open-hearted, so unaffected and frank!"

"Do you really think so?" asked M. Moriaz, fanning himself with the letter.

"He related to us his whole life," rejoined she, in a pedantic tone. "How many people could do as much?"

"A delightful narration. I only regret that he

was silent concerning one detail which was of a nature to interest us."

"An unpleasant detail?" she asked, raising her gooseberry-coloured eyes to him.

"On the contrary, a circumstance that does him honour, and for which I am obliged to him. Believe me, my dear demoiselle, I should be charmed to receive a son-in-law from your hands, and to give my daughter to a man whose genius and noble sentiments you divined from merely seeing him eat. Unfortunately, I fear this marriage will not come about; there is one little difficulty."

"What?"

"Count Larinski forgot to apprise us that he was already married."

Mlle. Moiseney sent forth a doleful cry. M. Moriaz handed her Mme. de Lorcy's letter; after reading it, she remained in a state of deep dejection; a pitiless finger had burst the iris bubble that she had just blown, and that she saw resplendent at the end of her pipe.

"Do not give way to your despair," said M. Moriaz; "take courage, follow the example I set you, imitate my resignation. But tell me, how do you think Antoinette will take the matter?"

"It will be a terrible blow to her," replied Mlle. Moiseney; "she loves him so much!"

"How do you know, since she has not judged it best to tell you?"

"I know from circumstances. Poor dear Antoinette! The greatest consideration must be used in announcing to her this intelligence; and I alone, I believe——"

"I agree with you," M. Moriaz hastened to interpose; "you alone are capable of operating on our patient without causing her suffering. You are so skilful! your hand is so light! Make the best of the situation, mademoiselle—I leave it to you."

With these words he took up his hat and cane, and hastened to get away, rather anxious about what had passed, yet feeling too happy, too much rejoiced, to be a good consoler.

It was not long before Mlle. Moriaz returned from her walk. She came humming a ballad; she was joyous, her complexion brilliant, her eyes sparkling, and she carried an armful of heather and ferns. Mlle. Moiseney went to meet her, her face mournful, her head bent down, her glance tearful.

"Why! what is the matter, my dear Joan?" she said; "you look like a funeral."

"Alas!" sighed Mlle. Moiseney, "I have sad news to communicate."

"What! have they written to you from Cormeilles that your parrot is dead?"

"Ah, my dear child, be reasonable, be strong; summon up all your courage."

"For the love of God, what is the matter?"

"Ah! would that I could spare you this trouble! Your father has just received a letter from Mme. de Lorcy."

Antoinette grew more attentive, her breath came quickly. "And what was there in this letter that is so terrible, so heart-rending?" she asked, forcing a smile.

"Fortunately, I am here," replied Mlle. Moiseney. "You know that your joys and your sorrows are mine. All the consolation that I can lavish upon you, the tenderest sympathy——"

"My dear Joan, in the name of Heaven, explain first, and then console!"

"You told me nothing, my child—I have a right to complain; but I have divined all. I can read your heart. I am sure that you love him."

"Of whom do you speak?" replied Antoinette, whose colour rose in her cheeks.

"Of a most charming man, who, either through inconceivable stupidity, or through most criminal calculation, neglected to tell us that he was married."

And, with these words, Mlle. Moiseney extended both arms, that she might receive into them Mlle. Moriaz, whom she believed to be already swooning.

Mlle. Moriaz did not swoon. She flushed crimson, then grew very pale; but she remained standing, her head proudly erect, and she said, in a tone of well-feigned indifference: "Oh! M. Larinski is married? My very sincere compliments to the Countess Larinski."

After which she busied herself arranging in a vase the heather and ferns she had brought back with her. Mlle. Moiseney stood lost in astonishment at her calm; she gazed in a stupor at her, and suddenly exclaimed: "Thank God! you do not love him! Your father has mistaken, he often mistakes; he sometimes gets the strangest ideas into his mind; he was persuaded that this would be a death-blow to you; he does not know you at all. Ah! unquestionably, M. Larinski is far from being disagreeable; I do not dispute his having some merit; but I always thought that there was something suspicious about him; his manners were a little equivocal; I suspected him of hiding something from us. As it appears, he has made a *mesalliance* that he did not care to acknowledge. It is deplorable that a man of such excellent address

should have low tastes and doubtful morality. His duty was to tell us all; he was neither loyal nor delicate."

"You dream, my dear," replied Antoinette. "What law, human or divine, obliged M. Larinski to tell us everything? Did you expect him to render an account of his deeds and misdeeds to us as to a tribunal of penance?"

In speaking thus, she took off her hat and mantilla, seated herself in the embrasure of a window, and opened a book which she began to read with great attention.

"God be praised! she does not love him," thought Mlle. Moiseney, who was not aware that Mlle. Moriaz was turning two or three pages at a time without perceiving it.

Deeply absorbed as she was, she still recognised her father's step as he came upstairs to his room. She hurried out to meet him. He noticed with pleasure that her face was not wan, nor were her eyes red. He was less satisfied when she said, in a calm, clear voice:

"Please show me the letter that you have received from Mme. de Lorcy."

"What is the use?" he rejoined. "I know it by heart. I am ready to recite it to you."

"Is it a letter that cannot be shown?"

"No, indeed; but as I tell you that I am ready to give you an account of it——"

"I would prefer to read it with my own eyes."

"After all, you have a right. There! take it. But I beg of you do not be offended at any unfortunate expressions."

"Mme. de Lorcy always knows how to choose the proper word to express her thought," she responded.

When she had run her eye rapidly over Mme. de Lorcy's eight closely written pages, she looked at her father and smiled.

"You must own that you found a very useful and a very zealous ally in Mme. de Lorcy; do her this justice, she has worked hard, and you owe her many thanks for having busied herself so actively in ridding you of 'this worthy man, this good man, this delightful man'; those are her own words, if you remember."

M. Moriaz exclaimed: "I hope you do not imagine that it was a matter arranged between us. Do you really suspect me of having some dark plot with Mme. de Lorcy? Do you believe me capable of being implicated in an act of perfidy?"

"God forbid! I only accuse you of being too joyous, and of not knowing how to conceal it."

"Is that a crime?"

"Perhaps it is an indiscretion."

"I swear to you, my dear child, that I only consider your happiness, and Mme. de Lorcy herself— Since M. Langis no longer thinks of you, what reason could she have——"

"I do not know," interrupted Antoinette; "but her prejudice would take the place of reason."

"So you will not believe that Count Larinski is married?"

"I believe it, without being certain, and I wish to be assured of it. Have I not acted in good faith through all this matter? was I not ready to comply with your conditions? I consented to refer to the judgment of Mme. de Lorcy. She has deigned to be gracious to the accused. She has admitted that M. Larinski is a perfectly honourable and even a delightful man; but she has discovered, at intervals of several days, first, that he does not love me, and then, that he has deceived me by letting me believe that he was still free. I wish to satisfy my own mind, and convince myself that I am not being played with."

"And you have concluded——"

"I have concluded that, with your permission, we shall leave to-morrow morning for Cormeilles."

This conclusion was by no means agreeable to M. Moriaz, whose face grew sensibly longer.

"Of what are you afraid? You know that I have character, and you ought to know, no matter what Mme. de Lorcy says, that I am not wanting in good sense. When it is proved to me that I have deceived myself, I will make the sign of the cross over my romance; it will be dead and buried, and I promise you not to wear mourning for it."

"So be it," said he; "I believe in your good sense, I have faith in your reason: we shall leave to-morrow for Cormeilles."

Four days later, Mme. de Lorcy was walking in an alley of her park. She was joined there by M. Langis, to whom she said, in a good-humoured tone: "Always grave and melancholy, my dear Camille! When will you cease your drooping airs? I cannot understand you. I do my best to be agreeable to you, to settle matters satisfactorily. Nothing seems to cheer you. You make me think of the hare in La Fontaine:

'Cet animal est triste, et la Crainte le ronge.'"

"Fear and hate, madame," replied he. "I hate this man; he is insupportable to me. I will give up coming to Maisons if I always must meet him here. Has he paid you his adieux for the last time?"

"Not yet; a little patience—we shall not count the minutes. Besides, what harm can this man do you? The lion has lost his claws—what do I say? —he has carried his good-nature to the point of muzzling himself. It is not generous to pursue with hate a disarmed enemy."

"Very well, madame, if he is not gone in three days, I return to my first idea; it was the best."

"You will cut his throat?"

"With all my heart."

"For the love of art?"

"I am not a very bloodthirsty individual, but I would take a singular delight in slashing at the skin of this gloomy personage."

Mme. de Lorcy shrugged her shoulders. "What makes you think him gloomy, my dear? You are perfectly unreasonable. You ought to adore M. Larinski; you are under the greatest obligations to him. He has been the first to succeed in touching the heart of our dear, hitherto insensible girl; he has broken the charm. She was the Sleeping Beauty; he has awakened her, and, through the favour of Heaven, he cannot marry her. I can see her in Churwalden, a prey to the gloomiest ennui, weeping over her illusions, furious at having been deceived. Do you not divine all the advantage that can be derived from a woman's anger?"

"You know that I love her, and yet I do not wish to owe anything to her spite."

"You are a child: be guided. The moment is come for you to propose. In a few days you will start for Churwalden, and you will say to this angry woman, 'I have lied—I love you.' In short, you will talk to her of your amorous flame; and you may, freely, under these circumstances, exhaust all your treasure-store of hyperbole. She will listen to you, I can promise you, and she will say to herself, 'I seek vengeance—here it is.'"

"I would like to believe you, madame," he replied, "but are you very certain that Mlle. Moriaz is still at Churwalden?"

And, pointing with his finger, he showed her at the end of the avenue a figure coming towards them clad in a pretty nut-brown dress with a long train sweeping the gravel.

"Truly, I believe that it is she," cried Mme. de Lorcy. "M. Moriaz is the most unskilful person; but, after all, not much harm is done."

Mlle. Moriaz had arrived the evening previous at Cormeilles. After resting somewhat from the fatigues of the journey, she had nothing more urgent to do than to order the horses put to her coupé and to come and pay her respects to her

godmother, who could not fail to be touched by this attention.

Mme. de Lorcy ran to Antoinette and embraced her several times, saying: "You are here at last! How charmed I am to see you again! You made us wait long enough; I began to fear that you had taken root in the Grisons. Is it indeed an enchanted land? I rather believe that your father is a cruel egotist, that he shamefully sacrificed you to his own convenience in prolonging his cure; but here you are—I will pardon him. Your poor, your *protégés*, are clamorous for you. Who do you think asked after you, the other day? Mlle. Galet, whom, according to your orders, I supplied with her quarter's allowance. How you spoil her! I found on her table a bouquet fit for a duchess; she insisted that you had sent it to her from where you were, and I had all the trouble in the world to make her understand that double camellias are not gathered among the glaciers of Roseg. Strew with flowers, if you will, Mlle. Galet's existence and garret; but do not fling at her head a bushel of double camellias, streaked with white; it is madness. I seriously propose to have you put under restraint. Never mind, I am very happy to see you again. You are looking very well.—Don't you think, Camille, that she appears extremely well?"

Mlle. Moriaz coldly received Mme. de Lorcy's embraces; but she smiled graciously on M. Langis, and pressed his hand affectionately. Mme. de Lorcy led them into her *salon*, where they talked on indifferent subjects. Antoinette was waiting for M. Langis's departure to broach the subject that she had at heart. At the end of twenty minutes, he rose, but immediately reseated himself. A door had just opened, giving admittance to Count Abel Larinski.

At the unexpected apparition of Samuel Brohl, the two women changed colour; the one flushed from the effort that she made to dissimulate her vexation, the other turned pale from emotion. Samuel Brohl crossed the *salon* with deliberate step, without appearing to recognise the person who was with Mme. de Lorcy. Suddenly he trembled, as if he had been touched by a torpedo, and, profoundly agitated, almost lost countenance. Was he as much astonished as he seemed? For some time the Sannois Hill had become his favourite promenade, and he never went there without going as far as a certain spot whence he could see the front of a certain house, the window-shutters of which had remained during two months as though hermetically sealed. It might be that the evening before he had found them open. Induction is

a scientific process with which Samuel Brohls are familiar.

He had abundant will and self-control. He was not long in recovering himself; he raised his head like one who feels himself strong enough to defy all dangers. After greeting Mme. de Lorcy, he drew near Antoinette, and asked how she was, in a grave, almost ceremonious tone.

"Your visit distresses me, my dear count," said Mme. de Lorcy to him; "I fear it is the last. Have you come to bid us farewell?"

"Alas! yes, madame," he replied. "The letter for which I have been waiting has not yet arrived; but this delay will not alter my plans: in three days I shall leave Paris."

"Without a desire to return, without regret?" she asked.

"I shall only regret Maisons, and the kind reception I have received there. Paris is too large; little people like myself feel their smallness more here than elsewhere; it does not require an excess of pride for one to dislike being reduced to the state of an atom. Residing in Vienna suits me better; I breathe freer there; it is a city better adapted to my size and taste. Birds do wrong to change their nests."

Thereupon, he began to describe and warmly

extol the Prater and its fine walks, Schönbrunn, its botanical gardens and the Gloriette, the church of St. Stephen's, and the limpid waters of the Danube; sometimes addressing himself to Antoinette, who listened without a word, and sometimes to Mme. de Lorcy, whose eyes were turned at intervals towards M. Langis, seeming to say to him: "Was I not right? Confess that your apprehensions lacked common-sense. Do you hear him? he has only half an hour to spend with her, and he describes the Prater. Are you still thinking of cutting his throat? Please say one polite and civil word to him. It is not he, it is you who are gloomy. Throw off your sinister air. How long will this taciturn reverie last in which you are sunk? You make yourself a laughing-stock—you act like a fool. You resemble a sphinx of the desert engaged in meditating upon a serpent, and who mistakes an innocent adder for a viper." M. Langis understood what she wished to say to him, but he did not throw off his sinister air.

After praising Vienna and its environs, Samuel Brohl eulogized the easy, careless character of the Viennese. He told, in a sprightly way, several anecdotes. His gaiety was rather feverish—somewhat forced, studied, and abrupt; but, nevertheless, it was gaiety. Mme. de Lorcy responded to him.

Mlle. Moriaz continued silent; she crumpled between her fingers the guipure lace of her Marie-Antoinette fichu, and, with fixed eye, she seemed to be counting the stitches. Samuel Brohl interrupted himself in the midst of a sentence, and rose suddenly. He turned towards Antoinette; in a hollow voice he begged her to tell M. Moriaz how much he regretted that his early departure would deprive him of the honour and pleasure of visiting him at Cormeilles; then he bowed to Mme. de Lorcy, thanked her for the happy moments that he had spent with her, and charged her to commend him to the kind remembrance of Abbé Miollens.

"We shall meet again, my dear count," she said to him, in a clear voice, emphasizing her words; "and I hope that, before long, we shall make the acquaintance of the Countess Larinski."

He looked at her in astonishment, and murmured, "I lost my mother ten years ago."

Immediately, without giving Mme. de Lorcy time to explain herself, he directed his steps hastily towards the door, followed by three glances, all three of which spoke, although they did not all say the same thing. The room was large; during the thirty seconds that it took him to cross it, the angel of silence hovered in the air.

He was about passing through the door, when,

as fatality ordained, there occurred to him an unfortunate and disastrous thought. He could not resist the desire to see Mlle. Moriaz once more, to impress forever on his memory her adored image. He turned, and their eyes met. He paid dearly for this weakness of the will. Apparently the violent restraint that he had exercised over himself for an hour had exhausted his strength. It seemed to him that his heart ceased to beat; he felt his legs stiffen, and refuse to serve him; his teeth clinched, his pupils dilated, consciousness forsook him. Suddenly, heavily as a mass of lead, he fell prone upon the floor, where he remained in a senseless condition.

Mlle. Moriaz could not suppress a cry, and seemed for a moment on the point of fainting herself. Mme. de Lorcy drew her arm around her waist, and hurried her into the next room, throwing to M. Langis a bottle of salts as she did so, and saying, "Take care of Count Larinski."

The first thing that M. Langis did was to set the bottle on the table, after which he went close up to Samuel Brohl, who, fainting and inanimate, bore almost the appearance of death. He examined him an instant, bent over him, then, folding his arms and shrugging his shoulders, he said to him, "Monsieur, Mlle. Moriaz is no longer here."

Samuel Brohl did not stir. "You did not hear me," continued Camille. "You are superb, M. le Comte; you are very handsome; your attitude is irreproachable, and you might well be taken for a dead person. You fell admirably; I swear I never saw at the theatre a more successful fainting-fit; but spare yourself further trouble for the performance. I repeat, Mlle. Moriaz is no longer here."

Samuel Brohl remained inert and rigid.

"Perhaps you want to try the strength of my wrists," continued Camille. "Very well, I will give you that satisfaction."

And, with these words, he seized him round his waist, summoned all his strength in order to lift him, and deposited him at full length on the sofa.

He examined him again, and said: "Will this tragi-comedy last much longer? Shall I not find a secret to resuscitate you? Listen to me, monsieur. I love with all my soul the woman that you pretend to love. Does that not suffice? Monsieur, you are a Polish adventurer, and I have as much admiration for your social talents as I have little esteem for yourself. Does that not suffice yet? I would not, however, lift my hand to you. I entreat you to consider the affront received."

It seemed as if the dead man trembled slightly, and Camille exclaimed: "Thank God! this time you have given sign of life, and the insult found the way to your heart. I would be charmed to restore you to your senses. I await your commands. The day, the place, and the weapons, I leave to your choice. And, stay! You can count on my absolute discretion. No one, I give you my word, shall learn from me that your fainting-fit had ears, and resented insults. Here is my address, monsieur."

And, drawing from his pocket a visiting-card, he tried to slip it into the cold, listless, pendent hand, which let it fall to the ground.

"What obstinacy!" he said. "As you will, M. le Comte; I am at the end of my eloquence."

He turned his back, seated himself in a chair, and taking a paper, he unfolded it. Meanwhile the door opened, and Mme. de Lorcy appeared.

"What are you doing there, Camille?" she exclaimed.

"You see, madame," he answered, "I am waiting until this great comedian has finished playing his piece."

He was not aware that Mlle. Moriaz also had just entered the *salon*. She cast him an angry, indignant, threatening glance, in which he read his

condemnation. He tried to find some word of excuse or explanation to disarm her anger, but his voice failed him. He bowed low, took his hat, and went away.

Mme. de Lorcy, very much agitated, opened a window; then she threw water into Samuel Brohl's face, rubbed his temples with a vivacity that was not altogether exempt from roughness, and made him smell English salts.

"Ah, my dear! pray go away," she said to Antoinette; "this is no place for you."

Antoinette did not go away; her face contracted, her lips trembling, she seated herself aside at some distance from the sofa.

Mme. de Lorcy's energetic exertions at last produced their effect. Samuel Brohl was not dead; a quiver ran through his frame, his limbs relaxed, and at the end of a few instants he reopened his eyes, then his mouth; he sat up, and stammered: "Where am I? What has happened? Ah, my God! it was but a moment ago that she was here!"

Mme. de Lorcy laid her hand on his mouth, and, bending over his ears, she said, in a severe, imperious tone, "She is here still!"

She did not succeed in making herself understood. One only recovers by degrees from such a fainting-fit. Samuel Brohl was again overcome by

weakness; his eyes closed once more, and he let his head sink between his hands. After a silence of a few moments he said, in a choked voice: "Ah! pardon me, madame. I am ashamed of myself. My courage failed me; my strength betrayed me. I love her madly, and I had sworn never to see her again. It was in order to fly from her that I was going away."

He raised his head; he saw Antoinette; he looked wildly at her, as though he did not recognise her.

He recognised her at last, made a gesture of alarm, rose precipitately, and fled.

Mlle. Moriaz drew near Mme. de Lorcy, and said to her, "Well, what do you think of it?

"I think, my dear," she replied, "that Mme. de Lorcy is a fool, and that Count Larinski is a powerful man."

Antoinette looked at her with a bitter smile, and touched her arm lightly. "Admit, madame," she said, "that if he had a hundred thousand livres' income, you would not think of doubting his sincerity."

Mme. de Lorcy did not reply; she could not say "No," and she was enraged to feel that she was both right and wrong. It is an accident that happens sometimes to women of the world.

CHAPTER VII

On her entering her coupé to return to Cormeilles, Mlle. Moriaz was the prey of an agitation that did not calm down during the entire drive. Her whole soul was stirred by a tender, passionate sentiment for the man who had swooned away in taking farewell of her; she was filled with anger against the foolish prejudices and the petty finesse of the people of the world; filled with joy at having baffled a monstrous conspiracy against her happiness; filled with pride because she had seen clearly, because she had not mistaken in her choice, and because the man whom she loved was worthy of being loved. During several days she had suffered cruelly from anxiety, from actual agony of mind, and over and over again she had said to herself, "Perhaps they are right." A woman's heart believes itself to be at the mercy of error, and it is torture to it to be obliged to doubt itself and its own clairvoyance. When it is unmistakably demonstrated to it that its god is only an idol of wood or of stone, that what was once adored must hence-

forth be despised, it feels ready to die, and imagines that some spring must give way in the vast machine of the universe, that the sky must fall, the earth crumble away; and yet a woman's error of judgment is not a matter of such very grave import. The sun continues to shine, the earth to revolve upon its axis, as though it had not occurred. The machine of the universe would be subject to quite too many accidents should it become unsettled every time a woman made a mistake.

"It was I who was right; they were incapable of comprehending him," thought Mlle. Moriaz, as she crossed the Seine, and she contemplated with a delighted eye the lovely blue sky, the tranquil waters, the verdant banks of the river, with their long range of poplar-trees. It seemed to her that all was going well, that order reigned everywhere, that the Great Mechanician was at his post, that the world was in good hands, and that travellers therein had no cause to fear untoward mischance.

When she arrived at Cormeilles, M. Moriaz was shut up in his laboratory, which he had been overjoyed to find just as he had left it. A velvet skull-cap perched on one side of his head, his sleeves turned up, a brown holland apron tied around his neck and his waist, a feather brush in his hand, he had proceeded at once to examine his

precious stock in detail—his furnaces, his long-necked, big-bellied matrasses, the curved necks and the tubulures of his retorts, his cucurbits, and his alembics. Balloons, tubes, pipettes, pneumatic vats, receivers, cupels, lamps, bell-glasses, blow-pipes, and mortars, he passed in review to assure himself that during his absence nothing had been damaged. He carefully dusted his jars, examined the labels, made sure that none of his treasures were cracked, that his gauges were not out of order. He was as happy as a king who has his troops pass in review before him, and feels convinced that they bear themselves well; that they will stand fire and do honour to their master.

Agreeable as was the occupation to which for two hours he had devoted himself, M. Moriaz had not forgotten the existence of his daughter and of M. Larinski. He knew that Antoinette had repaired to Maisons Lafitte to have an explanation with Mme. de Lorcy, and this thought cast a shadow over his felicity. He hoped, however, that this interview might turn out according to his wishes; that the Pole star, which had caused him so much disquietude, might disappear forever from his horizon.

Some one knocked at the door of his laboratory. "Come in!" he cried, and turning he saw

Antoinette standing upon the threshold. He gazed at her fixedly. Her eye was so animated, her countenance so beaming, so luminous, that involuntarily he dropped his arms and let fall, as he did so, a little vial he held in his hands.

"Naughty girl, to cause such havoc in her father's laboratory!" she cried, gaily.

"The harm done is not very great," he replied; and he began diligently brushing up the fragments of the vial. It was his way of gaining time, but he did it so awkwardly that she snatched the brush from his hands: "This is the way to sweep," said she.

He watched her, saying to himself: "This is the reverse of the scene at Churwalden. It is now I who wear a long face, and she cannot dissemble her joy. Just requital of things here below."

So soon as she had finished her brushing she looked around, and remarked: "Well, here you are once more in your paradise—this enchanted spot, where you taste such ineffable delights."

"Oh, yes, I am happy here—happy enough, that is," he replied, with modesty.

"Fastidious creature! It is altogether charming in your laboratory."

"Yes, it is suitable. Nevertheless, I often reflect that there is something wanting. Do you know what my dream is? I should like to have over in yonder corner a transparent *chapelle*. You, perhaps, are unacquainted with a *chapelle*. It is a framework or basket-funnel above a furnace, surmounted by a wide-mouthed chimney, for facilitating the release of volatiles and pernicious vapours, and having one side of glass. It enables the chemist to watch the process taking place within. German chemists have nearly always transparent *chapelles* in their laboratories."

"How can any one accuse you of lack of imagination?" she exclaimed. "You are a very romantic man, and your romance is a transparent *chapelle*. Now I know why you are so indulgent to the romances of others."

Then carelessly drawing the brush in her hand over an arm-chair, she seated herself in it, placed another seat facing her, and said: "Come, sit down here near me on this stool; I will put a cushion on it to make it more comfortable. Come, I must talk with you."

He drew near, seated himself, and put his ear towards her. "Must I take off my apron?" he asked.

"Why so?"

"I foresee that our conversation will revolve about matters pertaining to the height of romance. I wish to make a suitable appearance."

"Nonsense! your apron is very becoming. All that I desire and stipulate is, that you will accord me most religious attention."

She then proceeded to recount to him, point by point, all that had occurred at Mme. de Lorcy's. She began her recital in a tranquil tone; she grew animated; she warmed up by degrees; her eyes sparkled. He listened to her with deep chagrin; but he gazed on her with pride as he did so, thinking, "*Mon Dieu*, how beautiful she is, and what a lucky rascal is this Pole!"

When she had ended, there was a moment's pause, during which she left him to his reflections. As he maintained an ominous silence, she grew impatient. "Speak," she exclaimed. "I wish to know your innermost thoughts."

"I think you are adorable."

"Oh! please, do for once be serious."

"Seriously," he rejoined, "I am not certain that you are wrong, nor has it been proved to me that you are right; there remain some doubts."

She cried out eagerly: "According to this, the sole realities of this world are things that can be seen, touched, felt—a retort and its contents. Be-

yond this all is null and void, a lie, a cheat. Ah! your wretched retorts and crucibles! If I followed out this thought, I should be ready to break every one of them."

She cast about her as she spoke so ferocious and threatening a look, that M. Moriaz trembled for his laboratory. "I beg of you," he protested, "have mercy on my poor crucibles, my honest retorts, my innocent jars! They have nothing to do with this affair. Is it their fault that the stories you narrate to me so disturb my usual train of thoughts that I find it wholly impossible to make adroit replies?"

"You do not, then, believe in the extraordinary?"

"The extraordinary! Every time I encounter it, I salute it," replied he, drawing off his cap and bowing low; "but at the same time I demand its papers."

"Ah! there we are. I really imagined that the investigation had been made."

"It was not conclusive, since it failed to convince Mme. de Lorcy."

"Ah! who could convince Mme. de Lorcy? Do you forget how people of the world are constituted, and how they detest all that astonishes, all that exceeds their limits, all that they cannot

weigh with their small balances, measure with their tiny compasses?"

"*Peste!* you are severe on the world; I always fancied that you were fond of it."

"I do not know whether I am fond of it or not; it is certain that I scarcely should know how to live without it; but I surely may be permitted to pass an opinion on it, and I often tell myself that if Christ should reappear among us with his train of publicans and fishermen—are you listening?—that if the meek and lowly Jesus should come to preach his Sermon on the Mount in the Boulevard des Italiens——"

"To make a show of probability," he interrupted, "suppose you were to place the scene at Montmartre. Frankly, I cannot see what possible connection there can be between the Christ and your Count Larinski; and, pray, do not let us enter into a theological discussion; you know it is wholly out of my line. Religion seems to me an excellent thing, a most useful thing, and I freely accept Christianity, minus the romantic side, with which I have no time to occupy myself. You will at least grant me that, if there are true miracles, there are also false ones. How distinguish them?"

"It is the heart that must decide," said she.

"Oh! the infallibility of the heart!" exclaimed he. "There never was council yet that voted that."

There was a pause, after which M. Moriaz resumed: "And so, my dear, you are persuaded that M. Larinski is still free, and that Mme. de Lorcy lied?"

"Not at all; if she had lied, she would not have betrayed herself so naïvely just now. I accuse her of deceiving herself, or rather of having wished to deceive herself. Do you know what you are going to do—I mean this evening—after dinner? You are going to order up the carriage, and you are going——"

"To Paris, Rue Mont-Thabor!" he exclaimed, bounding up in his seat. "Very good, I will put on a dress-coat, and I will say to Count Larinski: 'My dear monsieur, I come to demand your hand for my daughter, who adores you. Certain malicious tongues assert that you are no longer free; I do not believe them; besides, this would be a mere bagatelle.' On the whole, I believe you would do better to put it down in writing for me; left to myself I never will get through with it; out of my professor's chair I have considerable difficulty in finding words!"

"Dear me, how hasty you are! Who suggests

such a thing? Abbé Miollens is our friend; he is a worthy man, whose testimony would be reliable."

"Now this is something like! I see what you mean. At this rate you will not need to prepare my harangue. Here we have an acceptable idea, a possible interview. This evening, after my dinner, I shall go see Abbé Miollens; but it is clearly understood, I presume, that if he confirms the sentence——"

"I shall not ask for its repeal, and I promise you that I will be courageous beyond anything that you can imagine; you shall not so much as suspect that I even regret my chimera. But, as a fair exchange, you on your side must make me a promise. If Abbé Miollens——"

"You know as well as I that you are of age."

"I know as well as you that I never will be content without your consent. Here once more, as in the Engadine, I say, 'Either he or no one.'"

"Did I not warn you that when once a formula has been pronounced, one is apt to keep on repeating it forever?"

"Either he or no one: that is my last word. Would you not rather that it should be he? Are you willing to accept him?"

"I will submit."

"With a good grace?"

"With resignation."

"With cheerful resignation?"

"I shall certainly do my best to acquire it; or, rather, if he makes you happy, I shall welcome him all the days of my life; in the contrary case, I will repeat, morning and evening, like Mme. de Lorcy: 'You would not listen to me; you ought to have believed me.'"

"It is agreed; you are a good father, and now we are in perfect harmony," she replied, impulsively seizing his two hands, and pressing them in her own.

He watched her a moment between his half-closed eyes, and then he cried, half resentfully:

"But, *mon Dieu*, why do you love this man?"

She replied, in a low voice: "Because I love him; this is my sole reason; but I find it good."

"Certainly most decisive. But, come, let us go quickly," he replied, rising. "I fear that my retorts and crucibles, if they listen to you much longer, will fall into a syncope as prolonged as that of M. Larinski. Was ever such a debate heard of in a chemical laboratory?"

As soon as dinner was over, M. Moriaz made ready to repair to Maisons, where Abbé Miollens

passed the summer in the vicinity of Mme. de Lorcy. Mlle. Moiseney followed him to the carriage, and said:

"You have a remarkable daughter, monsieur! With what courage she has assumed her rôle! With what resolution she has renounced an impossible happiness! Did you observe her during dinner? How tranquil she was! how attentive! Is she not astonishing?"

"As astonishing as you are sagacious," he replied.

"Ah! undoubtedly; I never thought that she loved him so much as you imagine I did: but he pleased her; she admired him. Did she ever utter a word of complaint, or a sigh, on learning the cruel truth? What strength of mind! what equability of temperament! what nobility of sentiment! You do not admire her enough, monsieur; you are not proud enough of having such a daughter. As to me, I glory in having been of some value in her education. I always made a point of developing her judgment, and putting her on her guard against all erratic tendencies. Yes, I can safely say that I took great pains to cultivate and fortify her reason."

"I thank you with all my heart," rejoined M. Moriaz, leaning back in one corner of the car-

riage; "you can most assuredly boast of having accomplished a marvellous work; but I beg of you, mademoiselle, when you have finished your discourse, will you kindly say to the coachman that I am ready to start?"

During the drive, M. Moriaz gave himself up to the most melancholy reflections; he even tormented himself with sundry reproaches. "We have acted contrary to good sense," he thought. "Her imagination has been taken by storm; in time it would have calmed down. We should have left her to herself, to her natural defence—her own good judgment, for she has a large stock of it. I fell on the unlucky idea of calling Mme. de Lorcy to my aid, and she has spoiled everything by her boasted *finesse*. As soon as Antoinette had reason to suspect that her choice was condemned by us, and that we were plotting the enemy's destruction, the sympathy, mingled with admiration, which she accorded to M. Larinski, became transformed into love; the fire smouldering beneath ashes leaped up into flames. We neglected to count on that passion which is innate in women, and which phrenologists call combativeness. With her there is now a cause to be gained, and, when love unites its interests with cards or with war, it becomes irresistible. Truly our cam-

paign is greatly jeopardized, unless Heaven or M. Larinski interfere."

Thus reasoned M. Moriaz, whom paternal misadventures and recent experiences had rendered a better psychologist than he ever had been. While busied with his reflections the carriage drove rapidly onward, and thirty-five minutes sufficed to reach the little *maison de campagne* occupied by Abbé Miollens. He found him in his cabinet, installed in a cushioned arm-chair embroidered by Mme. de Lorcy, slowly sipping a cup of excellent tea brought him by the missionaries from China. On his left was his violin-box, on his right his beloved Horace, Orelli's edition, Zürich, 1844.

Conversation began. As soon as M. Moriaz had pronounced the name of Count Larinski, the abbé assumed the charmed and contented countenance of a dog lying in wait for its favourite game.

He exclaimed, "A most truly admirable man!"

"Mercy upon us!" thought M. Moriaz. "Here we have an exordium strangely similar to that of Mlle. Moiseney. Do they think to condemn me to a state of perpetual admiration of their prodigy? I fear there must be some kinship of spirit between our friend the abbé and that crack-

brained woman; that he is cousin-german to her at least."

"How grateful I am to you, my dear monsieur," continued Abbé Miollens, lying back in his chair, "for having given us the pleasure of the acquaintance of this rare man! It is you who sent him to us; to you belongs the merit of having discovered him, or invented him, if you choose."

"Oh! I beg of you not to exaggerate," humbly rejoined M. Moriaz. "He invented himself, I assure you."

"At all events it was you who patronized him, who made him known to us; without you the world never would have suspected the existence of this superb genius, this noble character, who was hidden from sight like the violet in the grass."

"He is unquestionably her cousin-german," thought M. Moriaz.

"Only think," continued the abbé, "I have found M. Larinski all over again in Horace! Yes, Horace has represented him, trait for trait, in the person of Lollius. You know Marcus Lollius, to whom he addressed Ode ix. of book iv., and who was consul in the year 733 after the foundation of Rome. The resemblance is striking; pay attention!"

Depositing his cup on the table he took the book in his right hand, and placing the forefinger of his left by turns on his lips or complacently following with it the lines of especial beauty in the text, he exclaimed: "Now what do you say to this? 'Thy soul is wise,' wrote Horace to Lollius, 'and resists with the same constancy the temptations of happiness as those of adversity—*est animus tibi et secundis temporibus dubiisque rectus.*' Is not this Count Larinski? Listen further: 'Lollius detested fraud and cupidity; he despised money which seduces most men—*abstinens ducentis ad se cuncta pecuniæ.*' This trait is very striking; I find even, between ourselves, that our dear count despises money entirely too much, he turns from it in horror, its very name is odious to him; he is an Epictetus, he is a Diogenes, he is an anchorite of ancient times who would live happily in a Thebaid. He told us himself that it made little difference to him whether he dined on a piece of bread and a glass of water, or in luxury at the Café Anglais. But I have not finished. 'Happy be those,' exclaimed Horace, 'who know how to suffer uncomplainingly the hardships of poverty—*qui duram que callet pauperiem pati!*' Of whom does he speak—of Lollius, or of our friend, who not only endures his poverty but who

loves it, cherishes it as a lover adores his mistress? And the final trait, what do you think of it? Lollius was always ready to die for his country—'*non ille pro patria timidus perire.*' In good faith, is it not curious? Does it not seem as though Horace had known Count Larinski at Rome or at Tibur?"

"I do not doubt it for an instant," replied M. Moriaz, taking the book from the hands of Abbé Miollens and placing it respectfully on the table. "Luckily, our friend Larinski, as you call him, fell upon the excellent idea of resuscitating himself some thirty years ago, which procured for us the great joy of meeting him at Saint Moritz; and while we are on this subject— My dear abbé, have you a free, impartial mind? Can you listen to me? I have a question to propound, an elucidation to demand. It is not only the friend to whom I address myself, it is the confessor, the director of consciences, the man of the whole universe in whose discretion I place most reliance."

"I am all ears," responded the abbé, crossing the shapely legs in which he took no little pride.

M. Moriaz entered at once into the subject that troubled him. It was some moments before Abbé Miollens divined whither he was tending. As

soon as he had grasped a ray of light, his face contracted, and uncrossing his limbs, he cried: "Ah, what a misfortune! you will have to renounce your delightful dream, my dear monsieur, and, believe me, no one can be more grieved than I. I fully comprehend with what joy you would have seen your charming daughter consecrate, I will not say her fortune, for you know as well as I how little Count Larinski would care for that, but consecrate, I say, her graces, her beauty, and all the qualities of her angelic character to the happiness of a man of rare merit who has been cruelly scourged by Providence. She loves him, she is loved by him; Heaven would have blest their union. Ah, what a misfortune! I must repeat it, this marriage is impossible; our friend is already married."

"You are sure of it?" cried M. Moriaz, in a burst of enthusiasm that the good abbé mistook for an access of despair.

"I scarcely can pardon myself for causing you this pain. You ask if I am sure of it! I have it from our friend himself. One evening, apropos of I scarcely remember what, it occurred to me to ask if he were married, and he replied, briefly: 'I thought I had told you so.' Ah! my dear professor, it were needless to discuss whether such a

marriage would be a happy one, for it never can take place."

"Well, now we have something positive," M. Moriaz hastened to observe, "and there is nothing to do but yield to evidence."

"Alas! yes," rejoined the abbé; and, then, after a pause, during which he wore a reflective air, he added, "However——"

"There is no 'however,' M. l'Abbé. Believe me, your word suffices."

"But I might possibly have misunderstood."

"I have entire confidence in your ears—they are excellent."

"But pray allow me to observe that it is never worth while to despair too soon. Do you know what? Count Larinski came recently to see me without finding me at home. I owe him a farewell visit. To-morrow morning, I promise you, I will call on him."

"For what purpose?" interrupted M. Moriaz. "I thank you a thousand times for your kindly intentions, but God forbid that I should uselessly interfere with your daily pursuits; your time is too precious! I declare myself completely edified. I consider the proof firmly established; there is no further doubt."

As Mme. de Lorcy had remarked, Abbé Miol-

lens was not one to easily relax his hold upon an idea he had once deemed good. In vain M. Moriaz combated his proposition, bestowing secret maledictions on his excess of zeal; the abbé would not give up, and M. Moriaz was forced to be resigned. It was agreed that the next day the worthy man should call on Count Larinski, and that from Paris he should repair to Cormeilles, in order to communicate to the proper person the result of his mission. M. Moriaz perceived the advantage of having Antoinette learn from the abbé's own lips the fatal truth; and he did not leave without impressing upon him to be very circumspect, as prudent as a serpent, as discreet as a father confessor. He started for home with quite a contented mind, seeing the future lie smoothly and pleasantly before him, and it really seemed to him that the drive from Maisons to Cormeilles was a much shorter and more agreeable one than that from Cormeilles to Maisons.

Samuel Brohl was seated before an empty trunk, which he was apparently about to pack, when he heard some one knock at his door. He went to open it and found himself face to face with Abbé Miollens. From the moment of their first meeting, Samuel Brohl had conceived for the abbé that warm sympathy, that strong liking, with

which he was always inspired by people in whom he believed he recognised useful animals who might be of advantage to him, whom he considered destined to render him some essential service. He seldom mistook; he was an admirable diagnostician; he recognised at first sight the divine impress of predestination. He gave the most cordial reception to his reverend friend, and ushered him into his modest quarters with all the more *empressement*, because he detected at once the mysterious, rather agitated air he wore. "Does he come in the quality of a diplomatic agent, charged with some mission extraordinary?" he asked himself. On his side the abbé studied Samuel Brohl without seeming to do so. He was struck with his physiognomy, which expressed at this moment a manly yet sorrowful pride. His eyes betrayed at intervals the secret of some heroic grief that he had sworn to repress before men, and to confess to God alone.

He sat down with his guest, and they began to talk; but the abbé directed the conversation into topics of the greatest indifference. Samuel Brohl listened to him and replied with a melancholy grace. Lively as was his curiosity he well knew how to hold it in check. Samuel Brohl never had been in a hurry; during the month that had

elapsed he had proved that he knew how to wait—a faculty lacking in more diplomates than one.

Abbé Miollens's call had lasted during the usual time allotted to a polite visit, and the worthy man seemed about to depart, when, pointing with his forefinger to the open valise, he remarked: "I see here preparations that grieve me. I did dream, my dear count, of inviting you to Maisons. I have a spare chamber there which I might offer to you. *Hoc erat in votis*, I should indeed have been happy to have had you for a guest. We should have chatted and made music to our hearts' content, close by a window opening on a garden.

'Hæ latebræ dulces, etiam, si credis, amœnæ.'

But, alas! you are going to leave us; you do not care for the friendship accorded you here. Has Vienna such superior attractions for you? But I remember, you will doubtless be restored there to a pleasant home, a charming wife, children perhaps who——"

Samuel looked at him with an astonished, confused air, as he had viewed Mme. de Lorcy when she undertook to speak to him of the Countess Larinski. "What do you mean?" he finally asked.

"Why, did you not confide to me yourself that you were married?"

Samuel opened wide his eyes; during some moments he seemed to be in a dream; then, suddenly putting his hand to his brow and beginning to smile, he said: "Ah! I see—I see. Did you take me literally? I thought you understood what I said. No, my dear abbé, I am not married, and I never shall marry; but there are free unions as sacred, as indissoluble as marriage."

The abbé knit his brows, his countenance assumed an expression of chagrin and disapproval. He was about delivering to his dear count a sermon on the immorality and positive danger of free unions, but Samuel Brohl gave him no time. "I am not going to Vienna to rejoin my mistress," he interposed. "She never leaves me, she accompanies me everywhere; she is here."

Abbé Miollens cast about him a startled, bewildered gaze, expecting to see a woman start out of some closet or come forward from behind some curtain.

"I tell you that she is here," repeated Samuel Brohl, pointing to an alabaster statuette, posed on a *piédouche*. The statuette represented a woman bound tightly, on whom two Cossacks were inflict-

ing the knout; the socle bore the inscription, "Polonia vincta et flagellata."

The abbé's countenance became transformed in the twinkling of an eye, the wrinkles smoothed away from his brow, his mouth relaxed, a joyous light shone in his eyes. "How well it was that I came!" thought he. "And under what obligations M. Moriaz will be to me!"

Turning towards Samuel he exclaimed:

"I am simply a fool; I imagined— Ah! I comprehend, your mistress is Poland; this is delightful, and it is truly a union that is as sacred as marriage. It has, besides, this advantage—that it interferes with nothing else. Poland is not jealous, and if, peradventure, you should meet a woman worthy of you whom you would like to marry, your mistress would have nothing to say against it. To speak accurately, however, she is not your mistress; one's country is one's mother, and reasonable mothers never prevent their sons from marrying."

It was now Samuel's turn to assume a stern and sombre countenance. His eye fixed upon the statuette, he replied:

"You deceive yourself, M. l'Abbé, I belong to her, I have no longer the right to dispose of either my heart, or my soul, or my life; she will

have my every thought and my last drop of blood. I am bound to her by my vows quite as much, I think, as is the monk by his."

"Excuse me, my dear count," said the abbé; "this is fanaticism, or I greatly mistake. Since when have patriots come to take the vow of celibacy? Their first duty is to become the fathers of children who will become good citizens. The day when there will cease to be Poles, there will cease also to be a Poland."

Samuel Brohl interrupted him, pressing his arm earnestly, and saying:

"Look at me well; have I not the appearance of an adventurer?" The abbé recoiled. "This word shocks you?" continued Samuel. "Yes, I am a man of adventures, born to be always on my feet, and ready to start off at a moment's warning. Marriage was not instituted for those whose lives are liable at any time to be in jeopardy." With a tragic accent, he added: "You know what occurred in Bosnia. How do we know that war may not very shortly be proclaimed, and who can foresee the consequences? I must hold myself in readiness for the great day. Perhaps an inscrutable Providence may ere long offer me a new occasion to risk my life for my country; perhaps Poland will call me, crying, 'Come, I have

need of thee!' If I should respond: 'I belong no more to myself, I have given my heart to a woman who holds me in chains; I have henceforth a roof, a family, a hearthstone, dear ties that I dare not break!' I ask you, M. l'Abbé, would not Poland have a right to say to me, 'Thou hast violated thy vow; thou hast denied me; upon thy head rest forever my maledictions?'"

Abbé Miollens had just taken a pinch of snuff, and he hearkened to this harangue, tapping his fingers impatiently on the lid of his handsome gold snuff-box, which had been presented to him by the most amiable of his penitents.

"If this be the way you view it," replied he, "is your conscience quite tranquil, my dear friend? for you will permit me, I trust, to call you so. Ay, is it sure that from your standpoint your conscience has no accusations to make you? Is it certain that your heart has not been unfaithful to its mistress? If I may believe a certain rumour that has reached my ear, there took place a most singular scene yesterday at the house of Mme. de Lorcy."

Samuel Brohl trembled violently; he changed colour; he buried his face in his hands, doubtless to hide from the abbé the blushes remorse had

caused to mantle his cheeks. In a faint voice he murmured:

"Not a word more! you know not how deep a wound you have probed."

"It is, then, true that you love Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz?" asked the abbé.

"I have sworn that she never shall know it," replied Samuel, in accents of the most humble contrition. "Yesterday I had the unworthy weakness to betray myself. *Mon Dieu!* what must she have thought of me?"

As he spoke thus, his face buried in his hands, he slightly moved apart his fingers, and fixed upon the abbé two glittering eyes that, like cats' eyes, were capable of seeing clearly in the dark.

"What she thinks of you!" echoed the abbé, taking a fresh pinch of snuff. "Bah! my dear count, women never are angry when a man swoons away because of their bright eyes, especially when this man is a noble chevalier, a true knight of the Round Table. I have reason to believe that Mlle. Moriaz did not take your accident unkindly. Shall I tell you my whole thought? I should not be surprised if you had touched her heart, and that, if you take the pains, you may flatter yourself with the hope of one day being loved by ner."

At this moment the voice of his worthy friend

appeared to Samuel Brohl the most harmonious of all music. He felt a delicious thrill quiver through his frame. The abbé was telling him nothing he had not known before; but there are things of which we are certain things that we have told ourselves a hundred times, and yet that seem new when told us for the first time by another.

"You are not misleading me?" ejaculated Samuel Brohl, overwhelmed with joy, transported beyond himself. "Can it really be true?—One day I may flatter myself—one day she may judge me worthy— Ah! what a glorious vision you cause to pass before my eyes! How good and cruel together you are to me! What bitterness is intermingled with the ineffable sweetness of your words! No, I never could have believed that there could be so much joy in anguish, so much anguish in joy."

"What would you imply, my dear count?" interposed Abbé Miollens. "Have you need of a negotiator? I can boast of having had some experience in that line. I am wholly at your service."

These words calmed Samuel Brohl. Quickly recovering himself, he coldly rejoined:

"A negotiator? What occasion would I have for a negotiator? Do not delude me with a chi-

mera, and above all do not tempt me to sacrifice my honour to it. This height of felicity that you offer to me I must renounce forever; I have told you why."

Abbé Miollens was at first inclined to be indignant; he even took the liberty to rebuke, to expostulate with his noble friend. He endeavoured to prove to him that his principles were too rigorous, that such a thing is possible as exaggeration in virtue, too great refinement in delicacy of conscience. He represented to him that noble souls should beware of exaltation of sentiment. He cited the Gospels, he cited Bossuet, he also cited his well-beloved Horace, who censured all that was ultra or excessive, and recommended the sage to flee all extremities. His reasoning was weak against the unwavering resolution of Samuel, who resisted, with the firmness of a rock, all his remonstrances, and finally ended these with the words:

"Peace, I implore you! Respect my folly, which is surely wisdom in the eyes of God. I repeat it to you, I am no longer free, and, even if I were, do you not know that there is between Mlle. Moriaz and myself an insurmountable barrier?"

"And pray, what is that?" demanded the abbé.

"Her fortune and my pride," said Samuel. "She is rich, I am poor; this adorable being is not made for me. I told Mme. de Lorcy one day what I thought of this kind of alliances, or, to speak more clearly, of bargains. Yes, my revered friend, I love Mlle. Moriaz with an ardour of passion with which I reproach myself as though it were a crime. Nothing remains to me but to avoid seeing her, and I never will see her again. Let me follow to its end my solitary and rugged path. One consolation will accompany me: I can say that happiness has not been denied to me; that it is my conscience, admonished from on high, which has refused to accept it, and there is a divine sweetness in great trials religiously accepted. Believe me, it is God who speaks to me, as he spoke to me of old in San Francisco, to enjoin me to forsake everything and give my blood for my country. I recognise his voice, which to-day bids my heart be silent and immolate itself on the altar of its chosen cause. God and Poland! Beyond this, my watch-word, I have no longer the right to yield to anything."

And, turning towards the statuette, he exclaimed: "It is at her feet that I lay down my dolorous offering; she it is who will cure my bruised and broken heart."

Samuel Brohl spoke in a voice thrilling with emotion; the breath of the Divine Spirit seemed to play through his hair, and make his eyes grow humid. The eyes of the good abbé also grew moist: he was profoundly moved; he gazed with veneration upon this hero; he was filled with respect for this antique character, for this truly celestial soul. He never had seen anything like it, either in the odes or in the epistles of Horace. Lollius himself was surpassed. Transported with admiration, he opened wide his arms to Samuel Brohl, spreading them out their full length, as though otherwise they might fail to accomplish their object, and, clasping him to his bosom, he cried:

"Ah! my dear count, how grand you are! you are immense as the world!"

CHAPTER VIII

Abbè Miollens hastened to repair to Cormeilles, where he gave a faithful, circumstantial account of his conference with Count Larinski. He was still warm from the interview, and he gave free vent to the effusions of his enthusiasm. He struck up a Canticle of Zion in honour of the antique soul, the celestial soul, which had just been revealing to him all its hidden treasures. M. Moriaz, both astonished and scandalized, observed, dryly :

"You are right, this Pole is a prodigy ; he should either be canonized or hanged, I do not know which."

Antoinette said not a word ; she kept her reflections to herself. She retired to her chamber, where she paced to and fro for some time, uncertain regarding what she was about to do, or, rather, more restless than uncertain. Several times she approached her writing-table, and gazed earnestly at her inkstand ; then, seized with a sudden scruple, she would move away. At last she formed a

resolute decision, seized her pen, and wrote the following lines:

"MONSIEUR: Before setting out for Vienna, will you be so good as to come and pass some moments at Cormeilles? I desire to have a conversation with you in the presence of my father.

"Accept, monsieur, I beg of you, the expression of my most profound esteem.

"ANTOINETTE MORIAZ."

The next morning she received by the first mail the response she awaited, and which was thus fashioned:

"This test would be more than my courage could endure. I never shall see you again, for, should I do so, I would be a lost man."

This short response caused Mlle. Moriaz a disappointment full of bitterness, and blended with no little wrath. She held in her hand a pencil, which she deliberately snapped in two, apparently to console herself for not having broken the proud and obstinate will of Count Abel Larinski. And yet can one break iron or a diamond? The carrier had brought her at the same time another letter, which she opened mechanically, merely to

satisfy her conscience. She ran through the first lines without succeeding in comprehending a single word that she read. Suddenly her attention became riveted, her face brightened up, her eyes kindled. This letter, which a kind Providence had sent her as a supreme resource in her distress, was from the hand of Mlle. Galet, and here was what this retired florist of the Rue Mouffetard wrote:

"Ma chère Demoiselle: I learn that you have returned. What happiness for me! and how I long to see you! You are my good angel, whom I should like to see every day of my life, and the time has seemed so long to me without you. When you enter the garret of the poor, infirm old woman, it seems to her as though there were three suns in the heavens; when you abandon her, the blackness of midnight surrounds her. Mme. de Lorcy has been very good to me. As my angel requested her, she came a fortnight since to pay me the quarter due of my pension. She is a very charitable lady, and she dresses beautifully; but she is a little hard on poor people. She asks a great many questions; she wants to know everything. She reproached me with spending too much, being too fond of luxury, and you

know how that is. She forgets that everything is higher priced than it used to be, that meat and vegetables are exorbitant, and that just now eggs cost one franc and fifty centimes a dozen. Besides, a poor creature, deprived of the use of her limbs, as I am, cannot go to market herself, and it is quite possible that my *femme de ménage* does not purchase as wisely as she might. I know I have great scenes with her sometimes for bringing me early vegetables; *le bon Dieu* can, at least, bear me witness that I am no glutton.

"The good Mme. de Lorcy scolded me about a bouquet of camellias she saw on my table, just like those for which I have been grateful to my angel. I don't know what notions she got into her head about them. Ah! well, *ma chère demoiselle*, I have learned since that these double camellias—they are variegated, red and white—came to me from a man, for, at present, as it would appear, men have taken to give me bouquets and making me visits; it is rather late in the day. The particular man to whom I refer presented himself one fine morning, and, telling me that you had spoken to him of me, said that he wished to assure himself that I was well and wanted nothing. He returned several times, always pampering me with some attention or other. But the best of

all was when he came to tell me that my angel had returned. What a man he is! he has surely dropped right down from the skies! One evening when I was sick he gave me my medicine himself, and would have sat up with me all night if I had been willing to let him. You must tell me who he is, for it puzzles me greatly. He has the head of some grand lion; he is as generous as he is handsome, but very sad. He must have some great sorrow on his heart. The misfortune, so far as I am concerned, is that he cannot spoil me much longer—it is almost over now. He expects to leave here in two days; and he has announced to me that he will come to make his adieux to-morrow afternoon.

"You will come soon, won't you, *ma chère demoiselle*? I burn with impatience to embrace you, since you permit me to embrace you. You are my angel and my sunshine, and I am your very humble and devoted servant,

"Louise Galet."

This letter of Mlle. Louise Galet contained nothing definite, beyond, perhaps, the passage relative to the early vegetables and the supposed scenes with her *chambrière*. Whatever may have been the good demoiselle's past record, she cer-

tainly was not void of principles, and she prided herself on her truthfulness; only she did not always see the necessity of telling everything she knew; in her narratives she frequently omitted certain details. She had written at the instigation of Samuel Brohl, who had not explained to her his motives. To be sure, she had partially divined these, being shrewd and sly. He had commended himself to her discretion, for which he had paid liberally. Mlle. Galet had at first refused the round sum he had offered her; she had ended by accepting it with tender gratitude. These little pampering attentions make good friends.

An audacious idea suddenly came to Mlle. Moriaz; there was no time to recoil from it. She ordered up her coupé. M. Moriaz had just gone out to make a call in the neighbourhood. She determined to profit by his absence, and besought Mlle. Moiseney to make ready in haste to accompany her to Paris, where she had to confer with her dressmaker. Ten minutes later she stepped into her carriage, having ordered her coachman to drive like the wind.

Her dressmaker did not detain her long; from the Rue de la Paix she ordered to be driven to No. 27 Rue Mouffetard. She never was in the habit of permitting Mlle. Moiseney, who was very

short of breath, to climb with her to the fifth story, where Mlle. Galet lodged; upon this occasion she indicated to her an express order to remain peaceably below in the coupé to await her return.

She slowly mounted the stairs; on her way up she encountered a servant, who informed her that Mlle. Galet was lying down taking a nap, being somewhat indisposed, but that the key was in the door. The apartment of which Mlle. Moriaz was in quest was composed of three rooms, a vestibule serving as a kitchen, a tiny *salon*, and a bed-chamber. She paused a few moments in the vestibule to regain her breath, to gather together all her courage, to compose her mind; she had at once divined that there was some one in the *salon*. She entered; Mlle. Galet was not there, but he was there, the man whom she had come to seek. Apparently, he awaited the awakening of the mistress of the place. In perceiving the woman whom he had sworn never to see again, he trembled violently, and his eyes sought some loophole of escape; there was none. Standing upon the threshold, Antoinette barred the passage. She looked fixedly at him and felt certain of her victory; he had the air of one vanquished, and his defeat resembled a complete routing.

She crossed her arms, she smiled, and, in a firm, half-mocking tone, said :

" So this is the way you rob me of my poor people ! They flourish under it, I am well aware. Confess now that there is a little hypocrisy in your virtue. Mlle. Galet never for a moment doubted that these famous camellias were given for my sake. Bouquets costing sixty francs ! absolute folly ! How you despise money ! Why, then, do you not despise mine ? You are afraid of it, you fear to burn your fingers by touching it. You will not aid me to throw it out of the windows ? Your poor and mine will surely pick it up. Say, will you not ? My fortune is not such a great affair ; but it is certain that I alone do not suffice to spend it properly ; there is plenty for two—for two would really only be one. You cannot consent to share it with me ? You are too proud—that is it. The day before yesterday you were playing comedy ; you do not love me. It costs little to owe something to those we love."

He made a gesture of despair and cried :

" I implore you, let me go ! "

" Presently ; I propose telling you first all that is in my mind. I do not place much reliance on your boasted nobility of spirit ; it is pride, egotistical pride. Yes, your pride is your god—a pitiful

sort of a god! And as to Poland—" He winced at this word. After a pause, Antoinette continued: "It is she herself who will give, or rather lend, you to me. I solemnly promise that if ever she has need of you I will say to her, 'Here he is, take him'; and to you, yourself, I will say, 'She calls you—go.' But speak to me and look at me; you will not die of so doing. Are you so very much afraid of me? Come, have courage to repeat to me what you have said to others?"

He fell back into a chair, where he remained, his arms hanging helplessly at his sides, his head drooping on his breast, and he murmured:

"I knew well that if I saw you again I should be lost."

"Say, rather, saved. Your mind was sick; I have cured you. I work miracles; you once took the pains to write me so. Will you touch my hand? That will not bind you to anything; you can return it to me if you choose."

He took the hand she extended to him; he did not carry it to his lips, but he held it within his own.

"Listen to me," she resumed. "To-day, this very hour, you will set out for Cormeilles, and you will say to my father: 'She has given me her hand; it has seemed good to me to keep it;

allow me to do so?' Is it agreed upon? will you obey me?"

He exclaimed: "You are here, you speak to me, the world has disappeared; henceforth I believe only in you!"

"Well done! You see when two people frankly discuss matters they soon come to an understanding; but the main essential is to see each other. Since you are so wise when you see me, I naturally desire to have you see me always. There—take that!" And she handed him a medallion containing her portrait; then she moved towards the door. On the threshold she turned. "Please tell Mlle. Galet," said she, "that I respect her nap, and will return to-morrow. Mlle. Moiseney awaits me, and must be growing impatient. I have your word of honour? Adieu, then, until this evening. I must hasten away."

And she did hasten, or, rather, she flew away.

Returning from as well as driving into Paris, the coachman put his horses to full speed, and Cormeilles was reached before the soup was cold. Nevertheless, M. Moriaz had had abundant time for anxiety. He did not take his seat at table without first questioning Mlle. Moiseney; knowing nothing, she could give him no information; but she responded indefinitely to his queries with

that air of mystery beneath which it was her wont to disguise her ignorance. He resolved to question Antoinette after dinner. She anticipated him, taking him aside and recounting to him what had occurred.

"I presume," said she, "that henceforth you will believe in his pride and his disinterestedness. Did I not foretell you that I should have to put myself on my knees to compel him to marry me?"

He could not repress a movement of indignation.

"Oh, reassure yourself!" she resumed; "that is only my way of speaking. He was at my feet and I was standing."

M. Moriaz opened his lips and closed them again three times without speaking. He finally contented himself with a gesture, which signified, "The die is cast, let come what must."

Samuel Brohl religiously kept his word. After having made a most faultless toilet, he repaired by the railway to Argenteuil, where he took a carriage. He reached Cormeilles as the clock struck nine. He was ushered into the *salon*, where M. Moriaz was reading his journal. Samuel was pale, and his lips trembled with emotion. He greeted M. Moriaz with profound respect, saying:

"I feel, monsieur, like a criminal. Be merciful, and refuse her to me."

M. Moriaz replied: "The fact is, you come, monsieur, in the words of the evangelist, 'like a thief in the night'; but I have nothing to refuse you. You are not the son-in-law I frankly avow, whom I should have chosen. This matters not; my daughter belongs to herself, she is mistress of her own actions, and I have no reason to believe that she errs in her choice. You are a man of taste and of honour, and you know the worth of what she has given you. If you render Antoinette happy, you will find in me a warm friend. I have said all that is necessary; let us suppose that you have replied to me, and talk of something else."

Samuel Brohl considered the matter settled; he insisted no longer, and entered at once upon another topic. He knew how to be agreeable and dignified at the same time. He was as amiable and gracious as his lively emotion would permit. M. Moriaz was obliged to confess to himself that Count Larinski was as good company at Cormeilles as he had been at Saint Moritz, and had no other fault than having taken it into his head to become his son-in-law.

Their interview was a prolonged one. During

this time Antoinette had been promenading the walk in front of the house, inhaling the jasmine-perfumed air, pouring out her heart to the night and to the stars. Her happy reverie was troubled only by the presence of a bat, flitting incessantly from one end of the terrace to the other, flapping its wings above her head. The loathsome creature seemed to be especially in quest of her, circling around and above her with obstinate persistency, even venturing to graze her hair in passing; Antoinette even fancied that she could distinguish its hideous face, with deep pouches and long ears, and she moved away, quivering with disgust.

She heard a step on the gravel-walk. Samuel Brohl had taken leave of M. Moriaz and was crossing the terrace to regain his carriage. He recognised Antoinette, approached her and clasped on her wrist a bracelet he held in his hand, saying as he did so: "What could I give you that would equal in value the medallion you deigned to offer me and that shall never leave me? However, here is a trinket by which I set great store. My mother loved it; she always refused to part with it, even in the time of her greatest distress; she wore it on her arm when she died."

We are not all moulded alike; and there is no human clay in which are not intermingled some

spangles of gold. Intriguers as well as downright knaves are often capable of experiencing moments of sincere and pure sentiments; in certain encounters every human being rises superior to him- or herself. The upper part of Mlle. Moriaz's face was shaded by her red hood, the lower part lit up by the moon, which was slowly rising above the hills. Samuel Brohl contemplated her in silence; she seemed to him as beautiful as a dream. During two entire minutes he forgot that she had an income of a hundred thousand livres, and that, according to all probabilities, M. Moriaz would die one day. His head was completely turned by the thought that this woman loved him, that soon she would be his. Yes, for precisely two minutes, Samuel Brohl was as passionately in love with Mlle. Moriaz as might, perchance, have been Count Larinski.

He could not resist the impulse that transported him. He folded in his arms the slender, supple form of Antoinette, and imprinted upon her hair a kiss of flame, a true Polish kiss. She offered no resistance; but at this moment the bat that had already forced upon her its distasteful company renewed the attack, struck her full in the face, and stuck fast in her hood. Antoinette felt the touch of its cold, clammy wings, of its hooked

claws. She tore the hood from her head and flung it away in horror. Samuel Brohl sprang forward to pick it up, pressed it to his lips, and made his escape, like a thief carrying off his booty.

When Antoinette re-entered the *salon*, she found there Mlle. Moiseney, whose boisterous, overwhelming joy had just put M. Moriaz to flight. This time Mlle. Moiseney knew everything. She had seen Samuel Brohl arrive, she had been unable to control her overweening curiosity, and, without the slightest scruples, she had listened at the door. She cast herself into Antoinette's arms, pressed her to her heart, and cried: "Ah, my dear! oh, my dear! did I not always say that it would end thus?"

Mlle. Moriaz hastened to free herself from her embraces; she felt the need of being alone. On entering her chamber she took a hasty survey of it: her furniture, her pretty knick-knacks, her rose-tinted tapestry, the muslin hangings of her bed, the large silver crucifix hanging on the extreme wall, all seemed to regard her with astonishment, asking, "What has happened?" And she replied:

"You are right, something has happened."

She remained in contemplation before a por-

trait of her mother, whom she had lost very young.

"I have been told," she mused, "that you were a great romance-reader. I do not care for romances at all—I scarcely ever read them; but I have just been making one myself, with which you would not be discontented. This man would astonish you a little; he would please you still more. Some hours ago he seemed lost to me forever. I brazened it out. I went in search of him, and when he saw me he surrendered. Only now he was with me on the terrace; his lips touched me here on my hair, and thrilled me from head to foot. Do not feel displeased with me—his are pure and loyal lips! They have been touched by the sacred fire; they never have lied; never have there fallen from them other than proud and noble words; they modestly recount the history of a life without blemish. Ah! why are you not here? I have a thousand things to say to you, which you alone could comprehend; others do not comprehend me."

She began her toilet for the night. When she had unfastened her hair, she remembered that there was One in her chamber who could comprehend everything, and to whom she had yet said nothing. She knelt down, her wealth of hair

streaming over her beautiful shoulders, her hands reverently clasped, her eyes fixed on the silver crucifix, and she said, in a low tone:

"Forgive me that I have forgotten thee, thou who never hast forgotten me! I return thanks to thee that thou hast granted my desires: thou hast given me the happiness of which I have dreamed without daring to ask it. Ah, yes, I am happy, perfectly happy! I promise thee that I will cast the reflection of my joy among the poor and unfortunate of this world: I will love them as I have never loved them before! When we give them food and drink, we give it also unto thee; and when we give them flowers, this crown of thorns that has wounded thy brow bursts into bloom. I will give them flowers and bread. It is vain to say that thou art a jealous God. Full as may be my heart, thou knowest that there is always room for thee, and that thou never canst knock at the door without my crying: 'Enter; the house and all that therein is belong unto thee! My happiness blesses thee: oh, bless thou it!'"

While Mlle. Moriaz thus held communion with her crucifix, Samuel Brohl was rolling along the great highway from Cormeilles to Argenteuil, a distance of six kilometres. His head was held erect, his face was radiant, his eyes were like balls

of fire, his temples throbbed, and it seemed to him that his dilated chest might have held the world. He was speaking to himself—murmuring over and over again the same phrase. "She is mine!" he repeated to the vines bordering the road, to the mill of Trouillet, to the Sannois Hills, whose vague outlines loomed up against the sky. "She is mine!" he cried to the moon, which this evening shone for him alone, whose sole occupation was to gaze upou Samuel Brohl. It was plain to see that she was in the secret, that she knew that before long Samuel Brohl would marry Mlle. Moriaz. She had donned her festal garments to celebrate this marvellous adventure; her great gleaming face expressed sympathy and joy.

Although he had exhorted his coachman to make haste, Samuel missed the train, which was the last. He decided to put up for the night at Argenteuil, and sought hospitality at the inn of the Cœur-Volant, where he ordered served forthwith a great bowl of punch, his favourite drink. He betook himself to bed in the full expectation of enjoying most delicious dreams; but his sleep was troubled by a truly disagreeable incident. Glorious days are at times succeeded by most wretched nights, and the inn of the Cœur-Volant

was destined to leave most disagreeable reminiscences with Samuel Brohl.

Towards four o'clock he heard some one knocking at his door, and a voice not unknown to him cried:

"Open, I beseech you!"

He was seized with an insupportable anguish: he felt like one paralyzed, and it was with great difficulty that he rose up in a sitting posture. He remembered that the bolt was drawn, and this reassured him. What was not his stupefied amazement to see the bolt glide back in its shaft! The door opened; some one entered, slowly approached Samuel, drew back the curtains of his bed, and bent towards him, fixing upon him great eager eyes that he recognised. They were singular eyes, these, at once full of sweetness and full of fire, of audacity and of candour; a child, a grand soul, an unbalanced weakling—all this in one was in this gaze.

Samuel Brohl quailed with horror. He tried to speak, but his tongue was powerless to move. He made desperate efforts to unloose it; he finally succeeded in moving his lips, and he murmured:

"Is it you, Abel? I believed you dead."

Evidently Count Abel, the veritable Abel Larinski, was not dead. He was on his feet, his eyes

were terribly wide open, and his face never had worn more life-like colouring. Nothing remained but to believe that he had been buried alive, and that he had been resuscitated. In coming forth from the tomb, he had carried with him a portion of its dust; his hair was covered with a singular powder of an earthy hue, and at intervals he shook himself as though to make it fall from him.

With the exception of this there was nothing alarming in his appearance; but a mocking, half-crafty smile played about his lips. After a long pause, he said to Samuel:

"Yes, it is indeed I. You did not expect me?"

"Are you sure that you are not dead?" rejoined Samuel.

"Perfectly sure," he replied, once more shaking a mass of dust from his head. "Does my return incommode you, Samuel Brohl?" he added. "Your name is Samuel, I believe; it is a pretty name. Why have you taken mine? You must give it back to me."

"Not to-day," pleaded Samuel, in a stifled voice, "nor to-morrow, nor the day after to-morrow, but after the marriage."

Count Abel burst out laughing, which was by

no means his habit, and which therefore greatly surprised Samuel. Then he cried:

"It is I she will marry—she will be the Countess Larinski."

Suddenly the door opened again, and Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz appeared, robed in white like a bride, a crown on her head, a bouquet in her hand. She bent her steps towards Samuel, but the apparition arrested her progress, saying:

"It is not he whom you love; it is my history. Do you not see that this is a false Pole? His father was a German Jew, who kept a tavern. Here it was that this hero grew up. I will relate to you how."

Here Samuel put his hand over his mouth, and stammered: "Oh, for mercy's sake, say nothing!"

Heeding him not, the apparition continued: "Yes, Samuel Brohl is a hero. For five years he was the pledged lover of an old woman, and he fulfilled all the duties of his post. This cherished hero well earned his money. Are you not eager to be called Mme. Brohl?"

With these words, he opened wide his arms to Mlle. Moriaz, who fixed upon him a gaze at the same time astonishing and tender, and straining her to his bosom, kissed her hair and her crown.

Then Samuel Brohl recovered strength, life, movement; clinching his hands, he sprang forward to dispute with Abel Larinski his prey. Suddenly, with a shiver of terror and dismay, he paused; he had heard proceeding from a distant corner of the chamber a shrill, malignant laugh. He turned, and distinctly perceived his father—a greasy cap on his head, wrapped in a forlorn, threadbare, dirty caftan. This was unquestionably Jeremiah Brohl, and this night it seemed truly that the whole world had arisen from the dead. The little old man continued to laugh jeeringly; then in a sharp, peevish voice, he cried: "*Schandbube! vermaledeiter Schlingel! ich will dich zu Brei schlagen!*" which signifies: "Scoundrel! accursed blackguard! I will beat you to a jelly!" It was a mode of address that Samuel had heard often in his infancy; but familiar though he might be with paternal amenities, when he saw his father uplift a withered, claw-like hand, a cry escaped his lips; he started back to evade the blow, entangled his feet in the legs of a chair, stumbled, and flung himself violently against a table.

He opened his eyes and saw no one. He ran to the window and threw open the shutter; the growing dawn illumined the chamber with its

grayish light. Thank God! there was no one there. The vision had been so real that it was some time before Samuel Brohl could fully regain his senses, and persuade himself that his nightmare was forever dissipated, that phantoms were phantoms, that cemeteries do not surrender their prey. When he had once acquired this rejoicing conviction, he spoke to the dead man who had appeared to him, and whose provoking visit had indiscreetly troubled his sleep, and with considerable hauteur he said, in a tone of superb defiance: "We must be resigned, my poor Abel; we shall see each other again only in the valley of Jehosaphat; I have seen twenty shovelfuls of earth cast upon you—you are dead; I live, and she is mine!"

Thereupon he hastened to settle his account, and to quit the Cœur-Volant, within whose walls he promised himself never again to set foot.

At the very same moment, M. Moriaz, who had risen early, was engaged in writing the following letter:

"It is done, my dear friend—I have yielded. Pray, do not reproach me with my weakness; what else could I do? When one has been for twenty years the most submissive of fathers, one does not emancipate one's self in a day; I never

have been in the habit of erecting barriers, and it is scarcely likely that I could learn to do so at my age. Ah! *mon Dieu!* who knows if, after all, her heart has not counselled her well, if one day she will not satisfy us all that she was in the right? It must be confessed that this *diable* of a man has an indescribable charm about him. I can detect only one fault in him: he has committed the error of existing at all; it is a grave error, I admit, but thus far I have nothing else with which to reproach him.

"When one loses a battle, nothing remains but to plan an orderly retreat. Count Larinski, I regret to inform you, is armed with all needful weapons; he carries with him his certificate of birth, and certificate of the registry of death of both his parents. No pretext can be made on this score, and my future son-in-law will not aid me to gain time. The sole point upon which we must henceforth direct our attention is the contract. We scarcely can take too many precautions; we must see that this Pole's hands are absolutely tied. If you will permit me, I will one day ask you to confer with me and my notary, who is also yours. I venture to hope that upon this point Antoinette will consent to be guided by our counsels.

"I am not gay, my dear friend; but, having been born a philosopher, I bear my misfortunes patiently, and I will forthwith reread *Le Monde comme il va, ou la Vision de Babouc*, in order to endeavour to persuade myself that, if all is not well, all is at least supportable."

The evening of the same day, M. Moriaz received the following response:

"I never will pardon you. You are a great chemist, I grant, but a pitiful, a most deplorable father. Your weakness, which well merits another name, is without excuse. You should have resisted; you should have stood your ground firmly. Antoinette, although she is of age, never in the world would have decided to address to you a formal request of consent to this marriage. She would have made some scenes; she would have pouted; she would have endeavoured to soften you by assuming the airs of a tearful, heart-broken widow; she would have draped herself in black crape. And after that? Desperate case! These Artemisias are very tiresome, I admit; but one can accustom one's self to anything. Should philosophers, who plead such sublime indifference about the affairs of this mundane sphere, be at the mercy of a fit of the sulks, or a dress of black

crape? Besides, black is all the fashion just now, even for those who are not in mourning.

"You speak of contracts! You are surely jesting! What! distrustful of a Pole? take precautions against an antique man?—I quote from Abbé Miollens—against a soul as noble as great? Think what you are doing! At the mere thought of his disinterestedness being called into question, M. Larinski would swoon away as he did in my *salon*. It is a little way he has, which is most excellent, since it proves successful. Do not think of such trifles as contracts; marry them with equal rights, and leave the consequences to Providence! Follies have neither beauty nor merit, unless they are complete. Ah, my good friend, Poland has its charm, has it? Admirable! But you must swallow the whole thing. I am your obedient servant."

CHAPTER IX

THE pitiless sentence pronounced by Mme. de Lorcy grieved M. Moriaz, but did not discourage him. It was his opinion that, let her say what she might, precautions were good; that, well though it might be to bear our misfortunes patiently, there was no law forbidding us to assuage them; that it was quite permissible to prefer to complete follies those of a modified character, and that a bad cold or an influenza was decidedly preferable to inflammation of the lungs, which is so apt to prove fatal. "Time and myself will suffice for all things," proudly said Philip II. M. Moriaz said, with perhaps less pride: "To postpone a thing as long as possible, and to hold deliberate counsel with one's notary, are the best correctives of a dangerous marriage that cannot be prevented." His notary, M. Noirot, in whom he reposed entire confidence, was absent; a case of importance had carried him to Italy. Nothing remained but to await his return, until which everything stood in suspense.

In the first conversation he had with his daughter on the subject, M. Moriaz found her very reasonable, very well disposed to enter into his views, to accede to his desires. She was too thoroughly pleased with his resignation not to be willing to reward him for it with a little complaisancy; besides, she was too happy to be impatient; she had gained the main points of her case —it cost her little to yield in matters of secondary detail.

"You will be accused of having taken a most inconsiderate step," said her father to her. "You are little sensible to the judgment of the world, to what people say; I am much more so. Humour my weakness or cowardice. Let us endeavour to keep up appearances; do not let us appear to be in a hurry, or to have something to hide; let us act with due deliberation. Just at present no one is in Paris; let us give our friends time to return there. We will present Count Larinski to them. Great happiness does not fear being discussed. Your choice will be regarded unfavourably by some, approved of by others. M. Larinski has the gift of pleasing; he will please, and all the world will pardon my resignation, which Mme. de Lorcy esteems a crime."

"You promised me that your resignation would

be mingled with cheerfulness: I find it somewhat melancholy."

"You scarcely could expect me to be intoxicated with joy."

"Will you at least assure me that you have taken your part bravely, and that you will think of no further appeal?"

"I swear it to you!"

"Very good; then we will humour your weakness," she replied, and she said Amen to all that he proposed.

It was agreed that the marriage should take place during the winter, and that two months should be allowed to elapse before proceeding to the preliminary formalities. M. Moriaz undertook to explain matters to Samuel Brohl, who found the arrangement little to his taste. He took pains, however, to give no signs of this. He told M. Moriaz that he was still in the first bewildering surprise of his happiness, that he was not sorry to have time to recover from it; but he secretly promised himself to devise some artifice for abridging delays, for hastening the *dénoûment*. He was apprehensive of accidents, unforeseen occurrences, squalls, storms, tornadoes, sudden blights, in short everything that might damage or destroy a harvest; he impatiently longed to gather in his, and

to have it carefully stored away in his granary. In the interim he wrote to his old friend M. Guldenthal a letter at once majestic and confidential, which produced a most striking effect. M. Guldenthal concluded that a good marriage was much better security than a poor gun. Besides, he had had the agreeable surprise of being completely reimbursed for his loan, capital and interest. He was charmed to have so excellent a debtor return to him, and he hastened to advance to him all that he could possibly want, even more.

A month passed peaceably by, during which time Samuel Brohl repaired two or three times each week to Cormeilles. He made himself adored by the entire household, including the gardener, the porter and his family, and the Angora cat that had welcomed him at the time of his first visit. This pretty, soft white puss had conceived for Samuel Brohl a most deplorable sympathy; perhaps she had recognised that he possessed the soul of a cat, together with all the feline graces. She lavished on him the most flattering attentions; she loved to rub coaxingly against him, to spring on his knee, to repose in his lap. In retaliation, the great, tawny spaniel belonging to Mlle. Moriaz treated the newcomer with the utmost severity and was continually looking askance at him; when

Samuel attempted a caress, he would growl ominously and show his teeth, which called forth numerous stern corrections from his mistress. Dogs are born gendarmes or police agents; they have marvellous powers of divination and instinctive hatred of people whose social status is not orthodox, whose credentials are irregular, or who have borrowed the credentials of others. As to Mlle. Moiseney, who had not the scent of a spaniel, she had gone distracted over this noble, this heroic, this incomparable Count Larinski. In a *tête-à-tête* he had contrived to have with her, he had evinced much respect for her character, so much admiration for her natural and acquired enlightenment, that she had been moved to tears; for the first time she felt herself understood. What moved her, however, still more was that he asked her as a favour never to quit Mlle. Moriaz and to consider as her own the house he hoped one day to possess. "What a man!" she ejaculated, with as much conviction as Mlle. Galet.

The principal study of Samuel Brohl was to insinuate himself into the good graces of M. Moriaz, whose mental reservations he dreaded. He succeeded in some measure, or at least he disarmed any lingering suspicions by the irreproachable adjustment of his manners, by the re-

serve of his language, by his great show of lack of curiosity regarding all questions that might have a proximate or remote connection with his interests. How, then, had Mme. de Lorcy come to take it into her head that there was something of the appraiser about Samuel Brohl, and that his eyes took an inventory of her furniture? If he had forgotten himself at Maisons, he never forgot himself at Cormeilles. What cared he for the sordid affairs of this sublunary sphere? He floated in ether; heaven had opened to him its portals; the blessed are too absorbed in their ecstasy to pay heed to details or to take an inventory of paradise. Nevertheless, Samuel's ecstasies did not prevent him from embracing every opportunity to render himself useful or agreeable to M. Moriaz. He frequently asked permission to accompany him into his laboratory. M. Moriaz flattered himself that he had discovered a new body to which he attributed most curious properties. Since his return he had been occupied with some very delicate experiments, which he did not always carry out to his satisfaction; his movements were brusque, his hands all thumbs; very often he chanced to ruin everything by breaking his vessels. Samuel proposed to assist him in a manipulation requiring considerable dexterity; he had

very flexible fingers, was as expert as a juggler, and the manipulation succeeded beyond all hopes.

Mme. de Lorcy was furious at having been outwitted by Count Larinski; she retracted all the concessions she had made concerning him; her rancour had decided that the man of fainting-fits could not be other than an impostor. She had disputes on this subject with M. Langis, who persisted in maintaining that M. Larinski was a great comedian, but that this, strictly considered, did not prevent his being a true count; in the course of his travels he had met specimens of them who cheated at cards and pocketed affronts. Mme. de Lorcy, in return, accused him of being a simpleton. She had written again to Vienna, in hopes of obtaining some further intelligence; she had been able to learn nothing satisfactory. She did not lose courage; she well knew that, in the important affairs of life, M. Moriaz found it difficult to dispense with her approbation, and she promised herself to choose with discretion the moment to make a decisive assault upon him. In the meanwhile she gave herself the pleasure of tormenting him by her silence, and of grieving him by her long-continued pouting. One day M. Moriaz said to his daughter:

"Mme. de Lorcy is displeased with us; this

grieves me. I fear you have dropped some word that has wounded her. I shall be greatly obliged to you if you will go and see her and coax her into good-humour."

"You give me a far from agreeable commission," she rejoined, "but I can refuse you nothing; I shall go to-morrow to Maisons."

At the precise moment when this conversation was taking place, Mme. de Lorcy, who was passing the day in Paris, entered the École des Beaux-Arts. The exhibition of the work of a celebrated painter, recently deceased, had attracted thither a great throng of people. Mme. de Lorcy moved to and fro, when suddenly she descried a little old woman, sixty years of age, with a snub nose, whose little gray eyes gleamed with malice and impertinence. Her chin in the air, holding up her eyeglasses with her hand, she scrutinized all the pictures with a critical, disdainful air.

"Ah! truly it is the Princess Gulof," said Mme. de Lorcy to herself, and turned away to avoid an encounter. It was at Ostend, three years previous, during the season of the baths, that she had made the acquaintance of the princess; she did not care to renew it. This haughty, capricious Russian, with whom a chance occurrence at the *table d'hôte* had thrown her into intercourse,

had not taken a place among her pleasantest reminiscences.

Princess Gulof was the wife of a governor-general, whom she had wedded in second marriage after a long widowhood. He did not see her often; two or three times a year, that was all. Floating about from one end of Europe to another, they kept up a regular exchange of letters; the prince never took any step without consulting his wife, who usually gave him sound advice. During the first years of their marriage, he had committed the error of being seriously in love with her: there are some species of ugliness that inspire actually insane passions. The princess found this in the most wretched taste, and soon brought Dimitri Paulovitch to his senses. From that moment perfect concord reigned between this wedded couple, who were parted by the entire continent of Europe, united by the mail-bags. The princess did not bear a very irreproachable record. She looked upon morality as pure matter of conventionality, and she made no secret of her thoughts. She was always on the alert for new discoveries, fresh experiences; she never waited to read a book to the end before flinging it into the waste-paper basket, most frequently the first chapter sufficed; she had met with many disap-

pointments, she had wearied of many caprices, and she had arrived at the conclusion that man is, after all, of but small account. Nevertheless, there had come to her late in life a comparatively lasting caprice; during nearly five years she had flattered herself that she had found what she sought. Alas! for the first time she had been abandoned, forsaken, and that before she had herself grown tired of her fancy. This desertion had inflicted a sharp wound on her pride; she had conceived an implacable hatred for the faithless one, and then she had forgotten him. She had plunged into the natural sciences, she had made dissections—it was her way of being avenged. She held very advanced ideas: she believed in the most radical of the doctrines of evolution; she deemed it a clearly demonstrated fact that man is a development of the monkey, the monkey of the monad. She profoundly despised any one who permitted himself to doubt this. She did not court melancholy; to analyze or dissect everything, that was her way of being happy.

During their common sojourn at Ostend, Mme. de Lorcy had gained the good graces of the Princess Gulof through the dexterity with which she had dressed the wounds of Moufflard, her lapdog, whose paw had been injured by some awkward in-

dividual. She had been quite pleased with Mme. de Lorcy, her sympathy and her kindly services, and she had bestowed her most amiable attentions upon her. Mme. de Lorcy had done her best to respond to her advances; but she found herself revolted by this old magpie whose prattling never ceased, and whose chief delight was in the recital of the secret chronicles of every capital of Europe; Mme. de Lorcy, in fact, soon grew disgusted with her cosmopolitan gossip and her physiology; she found her cynical and evil-minded. In meeting her at the École des Beaux-Arts, her first impulse was to evade her; but suddenly she changed her mind. For some weeks past she had been governed by a fixed idea, about which all else revolved; an inspiration came over her, which doubtless fell directly from the skies.

"Princess Gulof," said she to herself, "has passed her life in running around the world; her real home is a railroad-car; there is not a large city where she has failed to make a sojourn; she is acquainted with the whole world: is it not possible that she knows Count Larinski?"

Mme. de Lorcy retraced her steps, cut her way through the crowd, succeeded in approaching the princess, and, taking her by the arm, exclaimed: "Ah! is it you, princess! How is Moufflard?"

The princess turned her head, regarded her fixedly a moment, and then pressing her hand between her thumb and forefinger she rejoined with as little ceremony as though they had met the day before: "Moufflard does very poorly indeed, my dear. He died two months ago of indigestion."

"How you must have mourned his loss!"

"I am still inconsolable."

"Ah! well, princess, I shall undertake to console you. I own a lapdog, not yet six months old; you never saw a more charming one or one with a shorter nose or whiter and more delicate hair. I am a great utilitarian, as you know. I only care for large dogs that are of some use. Will you accept of me Moufflard II? But you must come and fetch him yourself, which will procure me the pleasure of seeing you at Maisons."

The princess replied that she was on her way to England; that she was merely taking Paris in passing; that her hours were numbered; and two minutes later she announced to Mme. de Lorcy that she would call on her the following day, in the afternoon.

True to her appointment, Princess Gulof entered Mme. de Lorcy's *salon* the following day. The ladies occupied themselves first of all with

the lapdog, which was found charming and quite worthy to succeed to Moufflard I. Mme. de Lorcy watched all the time for a suitable opportunity of introducing the subject nearest her heart; when she thought it had come, she observed:

"Apropos, princess, you who know everything, you who are a true cosmopolitan, have you ever heard of a mysterious personage who calls himself Count Abel Larinski?"

"Not that I am aware of, my dear, although his name may not be absolutely unknown to me."

"Search among your reminiscences; you must have encountered him somewhere; you have visited all the countries of the world——"

"Of the habitable world," she interposed; "but according to my especial point of view Siberia scarcely can be called so, and it is there, if I mistake not, that your Count Larinski must have been sent."

"Would to heaven!— Perhaps there was question of procuring this little pleasure for his father; but, unfortunately, he took the precaution to emigrate to America. The inconvenience of America is, that people can return from there, for my Larinski has returned, and it is that that grieves me."

"What has he done to you?" inquired the

princess, pinching the ears of the dog who was slumbering in her lap.

"I spoke to you at Ostend about my goddaughter Mlle. Moriaz, who is an adorable creature. I proposed to marry her to my nephew, M. Langis, a most highly accomplished young man. This Larinski came suddenly on the scene, he cast a charm over the child, and he will marry her."

"What a pity! Is he handsome?"

"Yes; that, to tell the truth, is his sole merit."

"It is merit sufficient," replied the princess, whose gray eyes twinkled as she spoke. "There is nothing certain but a man's beauty; all else is open to discussion."

"Pray, allow me to consider matters from a more matter-of-fact point of view," said Mme. de Lorcy. "Also I may as well confide to you my whole perplexity: I suspect Count Larinski of being neither a true Larinski nor a true count; I would stake my life that the Larinskis are all dead, and that this man is some adventurer."

"You will end by interesting me," rejoined the princess. "Do not speak too severely of adventurers, however; they are one of the most curious varieties of the human family. Let your goddaughter marry hers; it will bring a piquant

element into her life; this poor world is so generally a prey to ennui."

"Thank you! my goddaughter was not born to marry an adventurer. I detest this Larinski, and I have vowed that I will play him some abominable trick!"

"Do not become excited, my dear. What colour are his eyes?"

"Green as those of the cats or of the owls."

Once more the eyes of Princess Gulof flashed and twinkled, and she cried: "An adventurer with green eyes! Why, it is a superb match, and I find you hard to please."

"You grieve me, princess," said Mme. de Lorcy. "I had promised myself that you would lend me the assistance of your judgment, your incomparable penetration, your experienced eye; that you would aid me in unmasking this Pole, in detecting in him some irremediable vice that would at once prove an insurmountable obstacle to the marriage. Be good, for once in your life; may I present him to you?"

"I repeat to you that I am merely taking Paris in passing," replied the princess, "and I am expected in England. Besides, you do too much honour to my incomparable penetration. I swear to you that I am no connoisseur in Larinskis;

you may as well spare yourself the pains of presenting to me yours. I am a good-natured woman, who has often been made a good dupe, and I do not complain of it. The best reminiscences of my past are of sundry agreeable errors, and of men skilled in deception. I have found it the wisest way to judge by the labels, and never to ask any one to show me the contents of his sack, for I long ago discovered that sacks are very apt to be empty or at best only poorly filled. Let your goddaughter act according to her own head; if she deceives herself, it is because she wishes to be deceived, and she knows better than you what suits her. *Eh! bon Dieu*, what matters it if there be one more unhappy household under the broad canopy of heaven? Besides, it is only fools who are unhappy, and who stupidly pause before a closed portal; others manage in some way to find a loop-hole of escape. Marriage, my dear, is an institution worn threadbare. Ten years hence there will be only free women and husbands on trial. Ten years hence the Countess Larinski will be a liberated countess. Let her serve her time as a galley-slave, and she will come out entirely cured of her follies."

Just as Princess Gulof was finishing this remarkable declaration of her principles, the door

opened and Mlle. Moriaz entered. Whatever it might cost her to do so, the future Countess Larinski faithfully kept the promise she had made to her father. Mme. de Lorcy was strictly on her guard; she hastened to meet her, held out both hands, kissed her on both cheeks, and reproached her, in the most affectionate tone in the world, for the rarity of her visits. Then she presented her to the princess, who said: "Come here, my beauty, that I may look at you; I have been told that you are adorable."

When Antoinette approached, she fixed on her a keen, penetrating glance, examined her from head to foot, passed all her perfections in review: one might have taken her for some Normandy farmer at a cattle-fair. The result of this investigation was satisfactory; the princess cried, "Truly she does very well!" and proceeded to assert that Mlle. Moriaz greatly resembled a certain person who had played a certain rôle in a certain adventure that she undertook to narrate. She had scarcely finished this recital when she entered on another. Mme. de Lorcy was on thorns. She knew by experience that the anecdotes of Princess Gulof were ordinarily somewhat indelicate and ill-suited to maiden ears. She watched Antoinette anxiously, and, when she saw the approach of an especially

objectionable passage, she was suddenly seized with a fit of coughing. The princess, comprehending the significance of that, made an effort to gloss over, but her glossings were very transparent Mme. de Lorcy coughed anew, and the princess ended by losing patience, and, brusquely interrupting herself, exclaimed: "And this, that, and the other, etc. Thus ended the adventure."

Mlle. Moriaz listened with an astonished air, not in the least understanding these attacks of coughing and these interruptions, nor divining the significance of the constant repetition of "this, that, and the other, etc." Princess Gulof struck her as a very eccentric and unpleasantly brusque person; she even suspected her of being slightly deranged or at least rather crack-brained; yet she was pleased with her for being present upon this especial occasion and sparing her a *tête-à-tête* with Mme. de Lorcy with its disagreeable explanations and unpleasant discussions.

She remained nearly an hour, planted on a chair, watching with a sort of stupor the turning of the fan of this word-mill, whose clapper kept up such an incessant noise. After having criticised to her heart's content her neighbours, including under that title emperors and grand-dukes, and having abundantly multipled the et ceteras, Prin-

cess Gulof suddenly turned the conversation to physiology: this science, whose depths she believed herself to have fathomed, was, in her estimation, the secret of everything, the Alpha and Omega of human life. She exposed certain materialistic views, making use of expressions that shocked the modest and delicate ears of Mlle. Moriaz. The astonishment the latter had at first experienced became now blended with horror and disgust; she judged that her visit had lasted long enough, and she proceeded to beat a retreat, which Mme. de Lorcy made no effort to prevent.

Upon arriving at Cormeilles, her carriage crossed with a young man on horseback, who with his head bowed down allowed his animal full liberty to take his own course. This young man trembled when a clear, soprano voice, which he preferred to the most beautiful music in the world, cried to him, "Where are you going, Camille?"

He bowed over his horse's neck, drew down his hat over his eyes, and replied, "To Maisons."

"Do not go there. I have just left because there is a dreadful old woman there who says horrid things." Then Mlle. Moriaz added, in a queenly tone, "You cannot pass—you are my prisoner."

She obliged him to turn back; ten minutes

later she had alighted from her coupé, he had sprung from his saddle, and they were seated side by side on a rustic bench.

A few days previous M. Langis had met M. Moriaz, who had complained bitterly of being forsaken by him as well as by Mme. de Lorcy, and who had extracted from him the promise to come and see him. Camille had kept this promise. Had he chosen well his time of doing so? The truth is, he had been both rejoiced and heart-broken to learn that Mlle. Moriaz was absent. Man is a strange combination of contradictions, especially a man who is in love. In the same way he had bestowed both blessings and imprecations upon Heaven for permitting him to meet Antoinette. During some moments he had lost countenance, but had quickly recovered himself; he had formed the generous resolution to act out consistently his rôle of friend and brother. He had acquitted himself of it so well at Saint Moritz, that Antoinette believed him cured of the caprice of a day with which she had inspired him and which she had never taken seriously.

"The last time I saw you," said she, "you dropped a remark that pained me, but I am pleased to think that you did not mean to do so."

"I am a terrible culprit," he rejoined, "and I

smite myself upon the breast therefor. I was wanting in respect to your idol."

"Fortunately, my idol knew nothing about it, and, if he had known, I would have appeased him by saying: 'Pardon this young man; he does not always know what he is saying.'"

"He even seldom knows it; but what help is there for it? A man given to fainting always did seem a curiosity to me. I know we should endeavour to conquer our prejudices; every country has its customs, and, since Poland is a country that pleases you, I will make an effort to see only its good sides."

"Now that is the right way to talk. I hope this very day to reconcile you with Count Larinski; stay and dine with us—he will be here very soon; the first duty of the people whom I love is to love one another."

M. Langis at first energetically declined accepting this invitation; Antoinette insisted: he ended by bowing in sign of obedience. Youth has a taste for suffering.

Tracing figures in the gravel with a stick he had picked up, M. Langis said, in a wholly unconstrained voice: "I do not wish M. Larinski any harm, and yet you must admit that I would have the right to detest him cordially, for I had the

honour two years ago, if I mistake not, of asking your hand in marriage. Do you remember it?"

"Perfectly," she replied, fixing upon him her pure, clear eyes; "but I ought to avow to you that this fancy of yours never seemed to me either very reasonable or very serious."

"You are wrong; I can certify to you that your refusal plunged me for as much as forty-eight hours into the depths of despair—I mean one of those genuine despairs that neither eat, drink, nor sleep, and that speak openly of suicide!"

"And at the end of forty-eight hours were you consoled?"

"*Eh! bon Dieu*, it surely was time to come to reason. I had hesitated a long time before asking your hand, because I thought, 'If she refuses me, I cannot see her any more.' But I still do see you, so all is well!"

"And how soon do you mean to marry?"

"I? Never! I shall die a bachelor. An aspirant to the hand of Mlle. Moriaz, being unable to win her, could not care for another woman. Nothing remains but to strike the attitude of the inconsolable lover."

"And when this ceases to hinder one from eating, drinking, or sleeping—what then?"

"One becomes interesting without being in-

convenienced by the consequences," he gaily interposed. Then, letting his eyes wander idly around for a moment, he added: "It seems to me that you have in some way changed the order of this terrace; put to the right what was at the left, thinned out the shrubbery, cut the trees; I feel completely lost here."

"You mistake greatly; nothing is changed here; it is you who have become forgetful. How! you no longer recognise this terrace, scene of so many exploits? I was a thorough tyrant; I did with you what I pleased. You revolted sometimes, but in his heart the slave adored his chains. Open your eyes. See! here is the sycamore you climbed one day to escape me when I wanted you to make believe that you were a girl, as you said, and you had little fancy for such a silly rôle. There is the alley where we played ball, and yonder the hedge and the grove where we played hide-and-seek."

"Say rather, *cligne-musette*; it is more poetical," he rejoined. "When I was down in Transylvania I made a *chanson* about it all, and set it myself to music."

"Sing me your *chanson*."

"You are mocking at me; my voice is false, as you well know; but I will consent to recite it

to you. The rhymes are not rich—I am no son of Parnassus."

With these words, lowering his voice, not daring to look her in the face, he recited the following couplets:

"Jadis, dans les bois, dans les prés,
Doux souvenir des temps passés,
Sous la coudraie et sur l'herbette
Nous jouions à cligne-musette,
Jadis, dans les bois, dans les prés.
T'en souvient-il, mon Antoinette,
Doux souvenir des temps passés?

"Jadis, dans les bois, dans les prés,
En jouant à cligne-musette,
Nous nous sommes si bien cachés
Que jamais, ô mon Antoinette,
Doux souvenir des temps passés,
Ni dans les bois, ni dans les prés,
Nous ne nous sommes retrouvés."

"Your *chanson* is very pretty," said she; "but it does not tell the truth, for here we are sitting together on this bench; we have not lost each other at all."

She was so innocent that she had no idea of the torture she was inflicting, and he saw this so plainly that he could not so much as have the satisfaction of finding fault with her; yet he asked himself whether in the best woman's heart there was not a foundation of cruelty, of unconscious

ferocity. He felt the tears start to his eyes; he scarcely could restrain them; he abruptly bowed his head, and began to examine a beautiful horned beetle, which was just crossing the gravel-path at a quick pace, apparently having some very important affairs to regulate. When M. Langis raised his head his eyes were dry, his face serene, his lips smiling.

"It is very certain," he observed, "that two years ago I must have appeared supremely ridiculous to you. This little playmate of old, this foolish little Camille, to attempt to transform himself into a husband! The pretension was absurd indeed."

"Not at all," she replied; "but I thought at once that it was a mistake. Little Camilles are apt to be hot-headed and fanciful; they are subject to self-deceptions regarding their sentiments. Friendship and love, however, are two entirely different things! I once said to Mlle. Moiseney that a woman never should marry an intimate friend, because it would be a sure way of losing him as such, and friends are good to keep."

"Bah! How much do you care now for yours? I find my rôle very modest, very insignificant. Open the trap-door—it is time for me to disappear."

"Bad counsel! I shall not open the trap-door. One always has need of friends. I can readily imagine the possibility of the very happiest married woman needing some advice or assistance that she could not ask of her husband, for husbands do not understand everything. If ever such a thing happens to me, Camille, I shall turn to you."

"Agreed!" he cried; "to help you out of embarrassment, I would run, if necessary, all the way from Transylvania."

He held out his right hand, which she shook warmly.

At this moment they heard a step that Mlle. Moriaz at once recognised, and Count Larinski appeared from the walk bordering the house. Antoinette hastened to meet him, and led him forward by laying hold of the tip of his glove, which he was in the act of drawing off.

"Gentlemen," said she, "I do not need to present you to each other; you are already acquainted."

It is a very difficult thing to lead two men who do not like each other into conversation: the present effort proved a total failure. Fortunately for all parties, M. Moriaz shortly made his appearance at the end of the terrace, and M. Langis

arose to join him. Antoinette remained alone with Samuel Brohl, who at once rather brusquely asked:

"Has M. Langis the intention of remaining here forever?"

"He has only just arrived," she replied.

"And you will send him away soon?"

"I thought so little of sending him away that I asked him to dinner, in order to give you an opportunity of becoming more fully acquainted with him."

"I thank you for your amiable intentions, but M. Langis pleases me little."

"What have you against him?"

"I have met him sometimes at Mme. de Lorcy's, and he always has shown me a most dubious politeness. I scent in him an enemy."

"Pure imagination! M. Langis has been my friend from childhood up, and I have forewarned him that it is his duty to love the people whom I love."

"I mistrust these childhood's friends," said he, growing excited. "I should not wonder if this youth was in love with you."

"Ah, indeed! then you should have heard him but now. He has been reminding me, this youth, that two years ago he sought my hand, and he

assured me that forty-eight hours sufficed to console him for my refusal."

"I did not know that the case was so grave, or the personage so dangerous. Truly, do you mean to keep him to dinner?"

"I invited him; can I retract?"

"Very well, I will leave the place," he cried, rising.

She uplifted her eyes to his face and remained transfixed with astonishment, so completely was his face transformed. His contracted brows formed an acute angle, and he had a sharp, hard, evil air. This was a Larinski with whom she was not yet acquainted, or rather it was Samuel Brohl who had just appeared to her—Samuel Brohl, who had entered upon the scene as suddenly as though he had emerged from a magic surprise-box. She could not remove her eyes from him, and he at once perceived the impression he was making on her. Forthwith Samuel Brohl re-entered his box, whose cover closed over him, and it was a true Pole who said to Mlle. Moriaz, in a grave, melancholy, and respectful tone:

"Pardon me, I am not always master of my impressions."

"That is right," said she; "and you will remain, won't you?"

"Impossible," he replied; "I should be cross, and you would not be pleased."

She urged him; he opposed her entreaties with a polite but firm resistance.

"Adieu," said she. "When shall I see you again?"

"To-morrow—or the day after—I do not know."

"Really, do you not know?"

He perceived that her eyes were full of tears. Tenderly kissing her hand he said, with a smile that consoled her:

"This is the first time we have had any dispute; it is possible that I may be wrong, but it seems to me that if I were a woman I would not willingly marry a man who was always right."

These words uttered, he assured himself anew that her eyes were humid, and then he left, charmed to have proved the extent of the empire he held over her.

When she rejoined M. Langis, the young man asked:

"Does it chance to be I who put Count Larinski to flight? If so, I should be quite heart-broken."

"Reassure yourself," said she; "he came expressly to inform me that his evening was not free."

The dinner was only passably lively. Mlle. Moiseney owed M. Langis a grudge; she could not forgive him for having made fun of her more than once—in her eyes an unpardonable sin. M. Moriaz was enchanted to find himself once more in company with his dear Camille; but he kept asking himself, mournfully, "Why is not he to be my son-in-law?" Antoinette had several attacks of abstraction; she did not, however, omit the least friendly attention to Camille. Love had become master of this generous soul; it might cause it to commit many imprudences, but it was not in its power to cause it to commit an injustice.

At nine o'clock M. Langis mounted his horse and took his departure.

Meanwhile, Mlle. Moriaz, her arm resting on the ledge of her window, was meditating on the strange conduct of Count Larinski as she gazed on the stars; the sky was without clouds, unless a little black speck above Mount-Valérien might be so called. Mlle. Moriaz's heart swelled with emotion, and she felt implicit confidence that all would be arranged the next day. What is one black spot in the immensity of a starry sky?

CHAPTER X

In all that Samuel Brohl did, even in his wildest freaks, there was somewhat of calculation, or contrivance. Unquestionably, he had experienced intense displeasure at encountering M. Camille Langis at Cormeilles; he had, doubtless, very particular and very personal reasons for not liking him. He knew, however, that there was need for controlling his temper, his impressions, his rancour; and, if he ceased to do so for a moment, it was because he counted upon deriving advantage therefrom. He was impatient to enter into possession, to feel his good-fortune sheltered from all hazards; delays, procrastinations, long waiting, displeased and irritated him. He suspected M. Moriaz of purposely putting his shoulder to the wheel of time, and of preparing a contract that would completely tie the hands of Count Larinski. He resolved to seize the first opportunity of proving that he was mistrustful, stormy, susceptible, in the hope that Mlle. Moriaz would become alarmed and say to her father, "I intend to marry in three

weeks, and without any conditions." The opportunity has presented itself, and Samuel Brohl had taken good care not to lose it.

The next day he received the following note:

"You have caused me pain, a great deal of pain. Already! I passed a sorrowful evening, and slept wretchedly all night. I have reflected seriously upon our dispute; I have endeavoured to persuade myself that I was in the wrong: I have neither been able to succeed, nor to comprehend you. Ah! how your lack of confidence astonishes me! It is so easy to believe when one loves. Please write me word quickly that you also have reflected, and that you have acknowledged your misdemeanour. I will not insist upon your doing penance, your face humbled to the ground; but I will condemn you to love me to-day more than yesterday, to-morrow more than to-day. Upon these conditions, I will pass a sponge across your grave error, and we shall speak of it no more.

"Ever yours. It is agreed, is it not?"

Samuel Brohl had the surprise of receiving at the same time another letter, thus worded:

"My dear Count: I cannot explain to myself your conduct; you no longer give me any

signs of life. I believed that I had some claims upon you, and that you would hasten to announce to me in person the great event of events, and seek my congratulations. Come, I beg of you, and dine this evening at Maisons with Abbé Miollens, who is dying to embrace you; he studies men in Horace, you know, and he finds none whom he prefers to you.

"You need not answer, but come; else I will be displeased with you as long as I live."

Samuel replied as follows to Mlle. Moriaz:

"Be assured I have suffered more than you. Forgive me; much should be forgiven a man who has suffered much. My imagination is subject to the wildest alarms. Great, unlooked-for joy has rendered me mistrustful. I have been especially low-spirited of late. After having resolutely fought against my happiness, I tremble now lest it escape me; it appears to me too beautiful not to prove only a dream. To be loved by you! How can I help fearing to lose the great boon? Each evening I ask myself: 'Will she still love me tomorrow?' Perhaps my anxiety is blended with secret remorse. My pride, ever on the alert to take umbrage, has often been my torment; you tell me it is only self-love: I will endeavour to

cure myself of it, but this cannot be done in a day. During these long months of waiting there will come to me more than one suspicion, more than one troubled thought. I promise you, however, that I shall maintain a rigid silence concerning them, and, if possible, hide them.

"You condemn me, for my punishment, to love you to-day more than yesterday; you know well this were impossible. No; I shall inflict upon myself another chastisement. Mme. de Lorcy has invited me to dinner. I suspect her of having a very mediocre feeling of good-will for me, and I also accuse her of being cold and insensible; of understanding nothing whatever of the heart's unreasonableness, which is true wisdom. Nevertheless, I will refrain from declining her invitation. It is at Maisons and not at Cormeilles that I shall this day pass my evening. Are you content with me? Is not the penance severe enough?

"But to-morrow—oh! I shall arrive at your home to-morrow by two o'clock, and I shall enter by the little green gate at the foot of the orchard. Will you do me a favour? Promenade about two o'clock in the gravel-walk that I adore. The wall being low at that place, I shall perceive from afar, before entering, the white silk of your sun-umbrella. I am counting, you see, upon sunshine.

How very childish! Yet, even this is not strange; I was born three months and a half ago; I commenced to live July 5th of this year, at four o'clock in the afternoon, in the cathedral at Chur. Forgive me all my errors, my suspicions, my childish absurdities."

Mlle. Moriaz concluded that it would be well to shorten the term of waiting, and that she would ask Count Larinski to fix the date of their marriage himself. As to the contract, she had immediate occasion to speak of it to her father, who announced to her that he had invited his notary, Maître Noirot, to dine with him the next day.

She was silent a few moments, and then said, "Can you explain to me the use of notaries?"

He replied about as did *le Philosophe sans le savoir*: "We only see the present; notaries foresee the future and possible contingencies."

She replied that she did not believe in contingencies, and that she did not like precautions, because they presupposed distrust, and might appear offensive.

"We have charming weather to-day," said her father; "nevertheless there is a possibility of rain to-morrow. If I started this evening on a journey, I should carry my umbrella, without fearing

to insult Providence. Who speaks to you of offending M. Larinski? Not content with approving of the step I propose taking, he will thank me for it. Why did he at first refuse to marry you? Because you are rich, and he is poor. The contract I wish to have drawn up will thoroughly set at ease his disinterestedness and his pride."

"The question of money no longer exists for him," she eagerly replied; "it is my desire that it should not be started again. And since you like comparisons, let us suppose that you invited one of your friends to take a turn in your garden. Your espaliers are laden with fruit, and you know that your friend is an honest man, and that, besides, he does not care for pears. Suppose you were to put handcuffs on him, would he or would he not be insulted?"

He answered in an exceedingly vexed tone, that this was entirely different, and Mlle. Moiseney having taken the liberty to interfere in the discussion in Antoinette's behalf, declaring that Counts Larinski are not to be distrusted, and that men of science are incapable of comprehending delicacy of sentiment, he gave full vent to his wrath, telling the worthy demoiselle to meddle with what concerned her. For the first time in his life he

was seriously angry. Antoinette caressed him into good-humour, promised that she would put on the best possible face to Maître Noirot, that she would pay religious attention to his counsels, and that she would endeavour to profit by them.

While M. Moriaz was engaged in this stormy interview with his daughter, Samuel Brohl was *en route* for Maisons. After the first flush of astonishment, the note and invitation of Mme. de Lorcy had pleased him immensely; he saw in it the proof that she had ceased to struggle against the inevitable—against Samuel Brohl and destiny; that she had resolved to bear her disappointment with a cheerful countenance. He formed the generous resolution to console her for her vexation; to gain her good-will by force of modesty and graceful attentions.

Alone in his compartment of the cars, Samuel Brohl was happy, perfectly happy. He was nearing port; he held it for an established fact that, before a fortnight, the banns would be published. Was he alone in his compartment? An adored image kept him company; he spoke to it, it replied to him. Blended with a rather uncommon frigidity of soul, Samuel Brohl had an imagination that readily took fire, and, when his imagination was kindled, he felt within him something warm,

which he took for a heart, and sincerely persuaded himself that he had such an organ. At this moment he saw Antoinette as he had left her the evening previous, her face animated, her cheeks flushed, her countenance full of reproach, her eyes tearful. She never had appeared to him so charming. He believed himself so madly in love that he was inclined to mock a little at himself. He tested in anticipation the joys that were in reserve for him; he revelled in thought of the day and the hour when this superb creature would be his, when he could view her as his own undisputed possession, and devour page after page, chapter after chapter, of this elegantly printed, richly bound book.

However, he was not the man to wholly absorb himself in such a reverie. His thoughts travelled farther; in idea he embraced his entire future, which he fashioned out at pleasure. He took leave of his sorrowful past as a blind man who by some miracle recovers his sight, parts from his dog and his staff—troublesome witnesses of evil days. He had done with petty employments, with ungrateful toil, with humiliating servitude, with anxiety about the morrow, with the necessity for counting every sou, with meagre repasts, with sordid expedients, with sorrow, distress, and usu-

ries; to all these he said farewell. Henceforth he would pick up silver and gold by the shovelful; he would have a share in abundance of festivals—the joy of doing nothing—the pleasure of commanding—all the sweetness and all the calm satisfaction of delightful egotism—reposing in a bed of eider-down—fed upon delicate birds—owning two or three houses, a carriage, horses, and a box at the opera. What a future! At intervals Samuel Brohl passed his tongue over his lips; they were parched with thirst.

Alnaschar the Lazy received one hundred drachms of silver as his entire patrimony, and he promised himself that he would one day marry the daughter of the grand-vizier. He meant to clothe himself like a prince, to mount upon a horse with a saddle of fine gold and housings of gold, richly embroidered with diamonds and pearls. He proposed to see that his wife formed good habits, to train her to obedience, to teach her to stand before him and be always ready to wait upon him; he resolved to discipline her with his looks, his hand, and his foot. Samuel Brohl possessed a calmer spirit than the Athenian Hippoclide; he was less brutal than Alnaschar of Bagdad: was he much less ferocious? He proposed, he also, to educate his wife; he intended that the daughter

of the grand-vizier should consecrate herself wholly to his happiness, to his service. To possess a beautiful slave, with velvety eyes, chestnut hair, tinged with gold, who would make of Samuel Brohl her padishah and her god, who would pass her life at his knees on the alert for his wishes, reading his good pleasure in his face, attentive to his fancies and to his eye-brows, belonging to him body and soul, uplifting to him the gaze of a timid gazelle or a faithful spaniel—such was his dream of conjugal felicity. And little need would he have to exert himself much in the education of Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz. Love would charge itself with that. She adored Samuel Brohl, and he relied upon her devotion; it were impossible that she could refuse him anything! She was prepared in advance for every compliance, every obedience; she was ready to be his humble servant in all things. Knaves make it their boast that they can readily fathom honest people; the truth is, they only half comprehend them. Honest people have sentiments, as do certain languages, reputed easy, which are full of mystery, of refined delicacy, inaccessible to the vulgar mind. A commercial traveller often learns to speak Italian in three weeks, and yet never really knows the language; Samuel Brohl had gained a superficial knowledge

of Mlle. Moriaz in a few days, and yet he was far from having a true comprehension of her.

He arrived at Maisons in the most cheerful, self-satisfied frame of mind. As he walked through the park, he remembered that Mme. de Lorcy had lost her only two children when they were still of a tender age; that she was therefore free to will her property as she pleased; that she had a short neck, an apoplectic temperament; that Antoinette was her goddaughter; that although she was piqued with Count Larinski the count was adroit, and would find a way to regain her sympathies. The park appeared to him magnificent; he admired its long, regular alleys, which had the appearance of extending as far as Peking; he paused some moments before the purple beech, and it seemed to him that there must be some resemblance between this beautiful tree and himself. He contemplated with the eyes of proprietorship the terrace planted with superb lindens, and he decided that he would establish himself in his Maisons château, that his pretty Cormeilles villa would merely be his country-seat. As it may be seen, his imagination refused him nothing; it placed happiness and wealth untold at his command.

We are unable to state whether Mme. de Lorcy actually had an apoplectic temperament; the one

thing certain is, that she was not dead. Samuel Brohl perceived her from afar on the veranda, which she had just stepped out upon in order to watch for his arrival. He had forgotten himself in the park, which should one day be his park, and she was beginning to be uneasy about his coming.

She cried out to him: "At last! You always make us wait for you," adding, in a most affable tone, "We meet to-day under less tragic circumstances than the last time you were here, and I hope you will bear away a pleasanter remembrance of Maisons."

He respectfully kissed her hand, saying: "Happiness must be purchased; I cannot pay too dearly for mine."

She ushered him into the *salon*, where he had scarcely set foot, when he descried an old woman lounging on a *causeuse*, fanning herself as she chatted with Abbé Miollens. He remained motionless, his eyes fixed, scarcely breathing, cold as marble; it seemed to him that the four walls of the *salon* swayed from right to left, and left to right, and that the floor was sliding from under his feet like the deck of a pitching vessel.

The previous day, Antoinette once departed, Mme. de Lorcy had resumed her attack on Prin-

cess Gulof, and the princess had ended by consenting to delay her departure, to dine with the adventurer of the green eyes, and to subject him to a close scrutiny. There she was; yes, it was indeed she! The first impulse of Samuel Brohl was to regain the door as speedily as possible; but he did nothing of the kind. He looked at Mme. de Lorcy: she herself was regarding him with astonishment; she wondered what could suddenly have overcome him; she could find no explanation for the bewilderment apparent in his countenance. "It is a mere chance," he thought at last; "she has not intentionally drawn me into a snare." This thought was productive of a sort of half relief.

"*Eh bien!* what is it?" she asked. "Has my poor *salon* still the misfortune to be hurtful to you?"

He pointed to a *jardinière*, saying: "You are fond of hyacinths and tuberoses; their perfume overpowered me for a moment. I fear you think me very effeminate."

She replied in a caressing voice: "I take you for a most worthy man who has terrible nerves; but you know by experience that if you have weaknesses I have salts. Will you have my smelling-bottle?"

"You are a thousand times too good," he rejoined, and bravely marched forward to face the danger. It is a well-known fact that dangers in a silken robe are the most formidable of all.

Mme. de Lorcy presented him to the princess, who raised her chin to examine him with her little glittering eyes. It seemed to him that those gray orbs directed at him were two balls, which struck him in the heart; he quivered from head to foot and asked himself confusedly whether he were dead or living. He soon perceived that he was still living; the princess had remained impassible —not a muscle of her face had moved. She ended by bestowing upon Samuel a smile that was almost gracious, and addressing to him some insignificant words, which he only half understood, but which seemed to him exquisite—delicious. He fancied that she was saying to him: "You have a chance, you were born lucky; my sight has been impaired for some years, and I do not recognise you. Bless your star, you are saved!" He experienced such a transport of joy that he could have flung his arms about the neck of Abbé Miollens, who came up to him with extended hand, saying:

"What have you been thinking about, my dear count? Since we last met a very great event has been accomplished. What woman wishes, God

wishes; but, after all, my own humble efforts were not without avail, and I am proud of it."

Mme. de Lorcy requested Count Larinski to offer his arm to Princess Gulof and lead her out to dinner. He mechanically complied; but he had not the strength to utter a syllable as he conducted the princess to table. She herself said nothing; she seemed wholly busied in arranging with her unoccupied hand a lock of her gray hair, which had strayed too far over her forehead. He looked fixedly at this short, plump hand, which one day in a fit of jealous fury had administered to him two smart blows; his cheeks recognised it.

During dinner the princess was very gay: she paid more attention to Abbé Miollens than to Count Larinski; she took pleasure in teasing the good priest—in endeavouring to shock him a little. It was not easy to shock him; to his natural, easy good-nature he united an innate respect for grandeurs and for princesses. She did not neglect so good an opportunity to air her monkey-development theories. He merrily flung back the ball; he declared that he should prefer to be a fallen angel rather than a perfected monkey; that in his estimation a parvenu made a much sorrier figure in the world than the descendant of an old family of ruined nobility. She replied that she was more

democratic than he. "It is pleasant to me," said she, "to think that I am a progressive ape, who has a wide future before him, and who, by taking proper pains, may hope to attain new advancement."

While they were thus chatting, Samuel Brohl was striving with all his might to recover from the terrible blow he had received. He noted with keen satisfaction that the eyesight of the princess was considerably impaired; that the microscopic studies, for which she had always had a taste, had resulted in rendering her somewhat near-sighted; that she was obliged to look out carefully to find her way among her wine-glasses. "She has not seen me for six years," thought he, "and I have become a different man, I have undergone a complete metamorphosis; I have difficulty sometimes in recognising myself. Formerly, my face was close-shaven, now I have let my entire beard grow. My voice, my accent, the poise of my head, my manners, the expression of my countenance, all are changed; Poland has entered into my blood—I am Samuel no longer, I am Larinski." He blessed the microscope, which enfeebled the sight of old women; he blessed Count Abel Larinski, who had made of him his twin brother. Before the end of the repast he had recovered all his as-

surance, all his aplomb. He began to take part in the conversation: he recounted in a sorrowful tone a sorrowful little story; he retailed sundry playful anecdotes with a melancholy grace and sprightliness; he expressed the most chivalrous sentiments; shaking his lion's mane, he spoke of the prisoner at the Vatican with tears in his voice. It were impossible to be a more thorough Larinski.

The princess manifested, in listening to him, an astonished curiosity; she concluded by saying to him: "Count, I admire you; but I believe only in physiology, and you are a little too much of a Pole for me."

After they had left the table and repaired to the *salon*, several callers dropped in. It was like a deliverance to Samuel. If the society was not numerous enough for him to lose himself in it, at least it served him as a shield. He held it for a certainty that the princess had not recognised him; yet he did not cease feeling in her presence unutterably ill at ease. This Calmuck visage of hers recalled to him all the miseries, the shame, the hard, grinding slavery of his youth; he could not look at her without feeling his brow burn as though it were being seared with a hot iron.

He entered into conversation with a supercili-

ous, haughty, and pedantic counsellor-at-law, whose interminable monologues distilled ennui. This fine speaker seemed charming to Samuel, who found in him wit, knowledge, scholarship, and taste; he possessed the (in his eyes) meritorious quality of not knowing Samuel Brohl. For Samuel had come to divide the human race into two categories: the first comprehended those well-to-do, thriving people who did not know a certain Brohl; he placed in the second old women who did know him. He interrogated the counsellor with deference, he hung upon his words, he smiled with an air of approbation at all the absurdities that escaped him; he would have been willing to have his discourse last three hours by the watch; if this charming bore had shown symptoms of escaping him, he would have held him back by the button.

Suddenly he heard a harsh voice, saying to Mme. de Lorcy: "Where is Count Larinski? Bring him to me; I want to have a discussion with him."

He could not do otherwise than comply; he quitted his counsellor with regret, went over and took a seat in the arm-chair that Mme. de Lorcy drew up for him at the side of the princess, and which had for him the effect of a stool of repent-

ance. Mme. de Lorcy moved away, and he was left *tête-à-tête* with Princess Gulof, who said to him, "I have been told that congratulations are due to you, and I must make them at once—although we are enemies."

"By what right are we enemies, princess?" he asked, with a slightly troubled feeling, which quickly passed away as she answered:

"I am a Russian and you are a Pole, but we shall have no time for fighting; I leave for London to-morrow morning at seven o'clock."

He was on the point of casting himself at her feet and tenderly kissing her two hands, in testimony of his gratitude. "To-morrow at seven o'clock," he mentally ejaculated. "I have slandered her; she has some good in her."

"When I say that I am a Russian," resumed the princess, "it is merely a formal speech. Love of country is a prejudice, an idea that has had its day, that had sense in the times of Epaminondas or of Theseus, but that has it no longer. We live in the age of the telegraph, the locomotive; and I know of nothing more absurd now than a frontier, or more ridiculous than a patriot. Rumour says that you fought like a hero in the insurrection of 1863; that you gave proof of incomparable prowess, and that you killed with your own hand

ten Cossacks? What harm had they done you, those poor Cossacks? Do they not sometimes haunt your dreams? Can you think of your victims without disquietude and without remorse?"

He replied, in a dry, haughty tone: "I really do not know, princess, how many Cossacks I have killed; but I do know that there are some subjects on which I do not love to expatiate."

"You are right—I should not comprehend you. Don Quixote did not do Sancho the honour to explain himself to him every day."

"Ah, I beg of you, let us talk a little of the man-monkey," he observed, in a rather more pliant tone than he had at first assumed. "That is a question that has the advantage of being neither Russian nor Polish."

"You will not succeed that way in throwing me off the track. I mean to tell you all the evil I think of you, no matter how it may incense you. You uttered, at table, theories that displeased me. You are not only a Polish patriot; you are an idealist, a true disciple of Plato, and you do not know how I always have detested this man. In all these sixty years that I have been in this world, I have seen nothing but selfishness, and grasping after self-gratification. Twice during dinner you spoke of an ideal world. What is an

ideal world? Where is it situated? You speak of it as of a house whose inhabitants you are well acquainted with, whose key is in your pocket. Can you show me the key? I promise not to steal it from you. O poet!—for you are quite as much of a poet as of a Pole, which is not saying much——"

"Nothing remains but to hang me," he interposed, smilingly.

"No, I shall not hang you. Opinions are free, and there is room enough in the world for all, even idealists. Besides, if you were to be hanged, it would bring to the verge of despair a charming girl who adores you, who was created expressly for you, and whom you will shortly marry. When will the ceremony take place?"

"If I dared hope that you would do me the honour of being present, princess, I should postpone it until your return from England."

"You are too amiable; but I could not on any consideration retard the happiness of Mlle. Moriaz. There, my dear count, I congratulate you sincerely. I had the pleasure to meet here the future Countess Larinski. She is adorable! It is an exquisite nature, hers—a true poet's wife. She must have brains, discernment; she has chosen you—that says everything. As to her fortune, I

dare not ask you if she has any; you would turn away from me in disgust. Do idealists trouble their heads with such vile questions?"

She leaned towards him, and, fanning herself excitedly, added: "These poor idealists! they have one misfortune."

"And what is that, princess?"

"They dream with open eyes, and the awakening is sometimes disagreeable. Ah, my dear Count Larinski, this, that, and the other, *et cætera.* Thus endeth the adventure."

Then, stretching out her neck until her face was close to his, she darted at him a venomous, viper-like look, and, in a voice that seemed to cut into his tympanum like a sharp-toothed saw, she hissed, "Samuel Brohl, the man with the green eyes, sooner or later the mountains must meet!"

It seemed to him that the candelabra on the mantel-piece darted out jets of flame, whose green, blue, and rose-coloured tongues ascended to the ceiling; and it appeared to him as though his heart was beating as noisily as a clock-pendulum, and that every one would turn to inquire whence came the noise. But every one was occupied; no one turned round; no one suspected that there was a man present on whom a thunderbolt had just fallen.

The man passed his hand over his brow, which was covered with a cold sweat; then dispelling, by an effort of will, the cloud that veiled his eyes, he, in turn, leaned towards the princess, and with quivering lip and evil, sardonic glance, said to her, in a low voice:

"Princess, I have a slight acquaintance with this Samuel Brohl of whom you speak. He is not a man who will allow himself to be strangled without a great deal of outcry. You are not much in the habit of writing, nevertheless he received from you two letters, which he copied, placing the originals in safety. If ever he sees the necessity of appearing in a court of justice, these two letters can be made to create quite a sensation, and unquestionably they will be the delight of all the petty journals of Paris."

Thereupon he made a profound bow, respectfully took leave of Mme. de Lorcy, and retired, followed by Abbé Miollens, who inflicted a real torture by insisting on accompanying him to the station.

No longer restrained by Mme. de Lorcy's presence, the abbé spoke freely of the happy event in which he prided himself to have been a co-operator; he overwhelmed him with congratulation, and all the good wishes he could possibly think of for his

happiness. During a quarter of an hour he lavished on him his myrrh and honey. Samuel would gladly have wrung his neck. He could not breathe until the abbé had freed him from his obtrusive society.

A storm muttered in the almost cloudless sky. It was a dry storm ; the rain fell elsewhere. The incessant lightning, accompanied by distant thunder, gleamed from all quarters of the horizon, and darted its luminous flashes over the whole extent of the plain. At intervals the hills seemed to be on fire. Several times Samuel, who stood with his nose against the glass of the car-door, thought that he saw in the direction of Cormeilles the flaring light of a conflagration, in which were blazing his dream and two millions, to say nothing of his great expectations.

He bitterly reproached himself for his folly of the previous day. "If I had passed yesterday evening with her," he thought, "surely she would have spoken of the Princess Gulof. I would have taken measures accordingly, and nothing would have happened." It was all M. Langis's fault ; it was to him that he imputed the disaster, and he hated him all the more.

However, as he approached Paris, he felt his courage returning.

"Those two letters frightened the old fairy," he thought. "She will think twice before she declares war with me. No, she will not dare." He added: "And if she dared, Antoinette loves me so much that I can make her believe what I please."

And he prepared in his mind what he should say, in case the event occurred.

At that very moment Mme. de Lorcy, who was alone with Princess Gulof, was saying: "Well, my dear, you have talked with my man. What do you think of him?"

The princess distressed her by her reply. "I think, my dear," she rejoined, "that Count Larinski is the last of the heroes of romance—or, if you like better, the last of the troubadours; but I have no reason to believe him to be an adventurer."

Mme. de Lorcy could get nothing further from Princess Gulof; she had invited her to remain overnight; she got no pay for her hospitality. The princess spent part of the night in reflecting and deliberating. Samuel Brohl's insolent menace had produced some effect. She sought to remember the exact purport of the two letters that formerly she had had the imprudence to write him from London, while he was fulfilling a business commission for her in Paris. On his return she

had required Samuel to burn these two compromising epistles, in her presence; he had deceived her; he burned the envelopes and blank paper. The thought of some day having her composition quoted in court, and printed verbatim in the petty journals, terrified her, and made her blood boil in her veins; she hardly cared to take Paris and St. Petersburg into her confidence concerning an experience the recollection of which caused her disgust—but to let such an admirable opportunity of vengeance escape her! renounce the delight of the gods and of princesses! permit this man who had just defied her to accomplish his underhand intrigue! She could not resign herself to the idea, and the consequence was that, during the night she spent at Maisons, she scarcely closed her eyes.

CHAPTER XI

The following day, after breakfast, Mlle. Moriaz was walking alone on the terrace. The weather was delightfully mild. She was bare-headed, and had opened her white silk umbrella to protect herself from the sun; for Samuel Brohl had been a true prophet—there was sunshine. She looked up at the sky, where no trace was left of the wind-storm of the preceding evening, and it seemed to her that she never had seen the sky so blue. She looked at her flower-beds, and the flowers that she saw were perhaps not there. She looked at the orchard, growing on the slope that bordered the terrace, and she admired the foliage of the apple-trees, over which Autumn, with liberal hand, had scattered gold and purple; the grass there was as high as her knee, and was fragrant and glossy. Above the apple-trees she saw the spire of the church at Cormeilles; it seemed to amuse itself watching the flying clouds. It was a high-festival day. The bells were ringing out a full peal; they spoke to this happy girl of that

far-off, mysterious land which we remember, without ever having seen it. Their silvery voices were answered by the cheerful cackling of the hens. She at once understood that a joyful event was occurring in the poultry-yard, as well as in the belfry; that below, as well as above, an arrival was being celebrated. But what pleased her more than all the rest was the little deep-set gateway with its ivy-hung arch at the end of the orchard. It was through this gate that he would come.

She walked several times around the terrace. The gravel was elastic, and rebounded under her step. Never had Mlle. Moriaz felt so light: life, the present, the future, weighed no heavier on her brow than a bird in the hand that holds it and feels it tremble. Her heart fluttered like a bird; like a bird it had wings, and only asked to fly. She believed that there was happiness everywhere; there seemed to be joy diffused through the air, in the wind, in every sound, and in all silences. She gazed smilingly on the vast landscape that was spread out before her eyes, and the sparkling Seine sent back her smile.

Some one came to announce that a lady, a stranger, had called, who wished to speak with her. Immediately thereupon the stranger appeared, and Mlle. Moriaz was most disagreeably surprised to

find herself in the presence of the Princess Gulof, whom she would willingly never have seen again. "This is an unpleasant visit," she thought, as she asked her guest to be seated on a rustic bench. "What can this woman want with me?"

"It was M. Moriaz whom I desired to speak with," began the princess. "I am told that he is out. I shall leave in a few hours for Calais; I cannot await his return, and I have, therefore, decided to address myself to you, mademoiselle. I have come here to render you one of those little services that one woman owes to another; but, first of all, I would like to be assured that I may rely on your absolute discretion; I do not desire to appear in this affair."

"In what affair, madame?"

"One of no little consequence; it concerns your marriage."

"You are extremely kind to concern yourself with my marriage; but I do not understand——"

"You will understand in a few moments. So you promise me——"

"I promise nothing, madame, before I understand."

The princess looked in amazement at Mlle. Moriaz. She had anticipated talking with a dove; she found that the dove had a less accommodating

temper and a much stiffer neck than she had believed. She hesitated for a moment whether she would not at once end the interview; she decided, however, to proceed:

"I have a story to relate to you," she continued, in a familiar tone; "listen with attention, I beg of you. I err if in the end you do not find it interesting. Thirteen or fourteen years ago, one of those unlucky chances, common in travelling, obliged me to pass several hours in a miserable little town in Galicia. The inn, or rather the tavern, where I stopped, was very dirty; the tavern-keeper, an ill-looking little German Jew, was still dirtier than his tavern, and he had a son who was in no better condition. I am given to forming illusions about people. In spite of his filth, this youth interested me. His stupid father refused him all instruction, and beat him unmercifully; he appeared intelligent; he made me think of a fresh-water fish condemned to live in a quagmire. He was called Samuel Brohl: remember the name. I pitied him and I saw no other way of saving him than to buy him of his father. This horrid little man demanded an exorbitant price. I assure you his pretensions were absurd. Well, my dear, I was out of cash; I had with me just the money sufficient for the expenses of the rest

of the journey; but I wore on my arm a bracelet that had the advantage of pleasing him. It was a Persian trinket, more singular than beautiful. I can see it now; it was formed of three large plates of gold ornamented with grotesque animals, and joined by a filigree network. I valued this bracelet; it had been brought to me from Teheran. By means of a secret spring, one of the plates opened, and I had had engraved inside the most interesting dates of my life, and underneath them my profession of faith, with which you have no concern. Ah! my dear, when one has once been touched by that dangerous passion called philanthropy, one becomes capable of exchanging a Persian bracelet for a Samuel Brohl, and I swear to you that it was a real fool's bargain that I made. This miserable fellow paid me badly for my kindness to him. I sent him to the university, and later I took him into my service as secretary. He had a black heart. One fine morning, he took to his heels and disappeared."

"That was revolting ingratitude," interrupted Antoinette, "and your good work, madame, was poorly recompensed; but I do not see what relation Samuel Brohl can have to my marriage."

"You are too impatient, my darling. If you had given me time I would have told you that I

had had the very unexpected pleasure of dining yesterday with him at Mme. de Lorcy's. This German has made great advances since I lost sight of him; not content with becoming a Pole, he is now a person of vast importance. He is called Count Abel Larinski, and he is to marry very soon Mlle. Antoinette Moriaz."

The blood rushed into Antoinette's cheeks, and her eyes flashed fire. Princess Gulof entirely mistook the sentiment that animated her, and said: "My dear, don't be angry, don't be indignant, your indignation will not help you at all. Without doubt, a rascal capable of deceiving such a charming girl as you deserves death ten times over; but be careful not to make an exposure! My dear, scandal always splashes mud over every one concerned, and there is a rather vulgar but exceedingly sensible Turkish proverb that says that the more garlic is crushed, the stronger becomes its odour. Believe me, you would not come off without a tinge of ridicule; certain mistakes always appear a little ridiculous, and it is useless to proclaim them to the universe. Thank Heaven! you are not yet the Countess Larinski—I arrived in time to save you. Be silent about the discovery you have just made; by no means mention it to Samuel Brohl, and seek a proper

pretext to break with him. You would not be a woman if you could not find ten for one."

Mlle. Moriaz could no longer restrain her anger. "Madame," she exclaimed excitedly, "will you declare to M. Larinski, in my presence, that his name is Samuel Brohl?"

"I made that declaration to him yesterday—it is useless to repeat it. He was nearer dead than alive, and I was truly sorry for the state into which I had thrown him. I cannot disguise from myself that I am the cause of all this; why did I take the boy from his father's tavern and his natal mud? Perhaps there he would have remained honest. It was I who launched him into the world and gave him the desire to advance, I put the trump-cards into his hand, but he found that he could not win fast enough by fair play, so he ended by cheating. It is not my place to overwhelm the poor devil—we owe some consideration to those who are under obligations to us; and, once more, I desire not to appear further in this business. Promise me that Samuel Brohl never will be informed of the measures I have taken."

She replied, in a haughty tone: "I promise you, madame, that I never will do Count Larinski the wrong to repeat to him a single word of the very likely story you have related to me."

The princess rose hastily, remained standing before Mlle. Moriaz, and contemplated her in silence; finally she said, in tones of the most cutting sarcasm: "Ah! you do not believe me, my dear. Decidedly you do not believe me. You are right; you should not put faith in an old woman's childish chatter. No, my darling, there is no Samuel Brohl: I dined yesterday at Maisons with the most authentic of Counts Larinski, and nothing remains for me to say but to present my best wishes for the certain happiness of the Countess Larinski, *et cætera*—of the Countess Larinski and company."

With these words she bowed, turned on her heels, and disappeared.

Mlle. Moriaz remained an instant as if stunned by a blow. She questioned herself as to whether she had not seen a vision, or had had the nightmare. Was it, indeed, a Russian princess of flesh and blood who had just been there, who had been seated close beside her, and had conversed so strangely with her that the belfry of Cormeilles could not hear it without falling into a profound stupor? In fact, the belfry of Cormeilles had become silent, its bells no longer rang; an appalling silence reigned for two leagues round.

Antoinette soon controlled her emotions. "The

day before yesterday," she thought, "this woman appeared to me to be deranged: she is a lunatic; I wish that Abel were here, he could tell me what happened at dinner between him and this dotard, and we should laugh over it together. Perhaps nothing happened at all. The Princess Gulof should be confined. They do very wrong to let maniacs like that go at large. It is dangerous; the bells of Cormeilles have ceased ringing. Ah! *bon Dieu*, who knows? Mme. de Lorcy surely has a hand in this business; it is the result of some grand plot. How many acts are there in the play? Here we are at the second or third; but there are some jokes that are very provoking. I shall end by being seriously angry."

Princess Gulof appeared to have entirely failed in her object. It seemed to Mlle. Moriaz that for the last twenty minutes she loved Count Larinski more than ever before.

The hour drew near; he was on the way; she had never been so impatient to see him. She saw some one at the end of the terrace. It was M. Camille Langis, who was going towards the laboratory.

He turned his head, retraced his steps, and came to her. M. Moriaz had asked him to translate two pages of a German memoir which he had

not been able to understand. Camille was bringing the translation; perhaps that was the reason of his coming back to Cormeilles after two days; perhaps, too, it was only a pretext.

Mlle. Moriaz could not help thinking that his visit was inopportune; that he had chosen an unfortunate time for it. "If the count finds him still here," thought she, "I am not afraid that he will make a scene, but all his pleasure will be spoiled." There was a tinge of coldness in her welcome to M. Langis, of which he was sensible.

"I am in the way," he said, making a movement to retire.

She kept him, and altered her tone: "You are never in the way, Camille. Sit there."

He seated himself, and talked of the races at Chantilly, that he had attended the day before.

She listened to him, bowed her head in sign of approval; but she heard his voice through a mist that veiled her senses. She lifted her hand to brush away a wasp that annoyed her by its buzzing. The lace of her cuff, in falling back, left her wrist exposed.

"What a curious bracelet you have!" said M. Langis.

"Have you not seen it before?" she replied. "It is some time since——"

She interrupted herself, a sudden idea occurring to her. She looked at her wrist. This bracelet from which she never was parted—this bracelet that Count Larinski had given to her—this bracelet that he loved because it had belonged to his mother, and that the late Countess Larinski had worn as long as she lived—resembled none other; but Mlle. Moriaz observed that it had a strong resemblance to the Persian bracelet that the Princess Gulof had described to her, and which she had exchanged for Samuel Brohl. The three gold plates, the grotesque animals, the filigree network—nothing was wanting. She took it from her arm and handed it to M. Langis, saying to him: "There is, it seems, something written on the interior of one of these plates; but you must know the secret to be able to open it. Can you guess secrets?"

He carefully examined the bracelet. "Two of these plates," said he, "are solid, and of heavy gold; the third is hollow, and might serve as a case. I see a little hinge that is almost invisible; but I seek in vain for the secret—I cannot find it."

"Is the hinge strong?"

"Not very, and the lid easily could be forced open."

"That is what I want you to do," she rejoined.

"What are you thinking of? I would not spoil a trinket that you value."

She replied: "I have made the acquaintance of a Russian princess who has a mania for physiology and dissection. I have caught the disease, and I want to begin to dissect. I am fond of this trinket, but I want to know what is inside. Do as I tell you," she continued. "You will find in the laboratory the necessary instruments. Go; the key is in the door."

He consulted her look; her eye was burning, her voice broken, and she repeated: "Go—go! Do you not understand me?"

He obeyed, went to the laboratory, taking the bracelet with him. After five minutes he returned, saying: "I am very unskilful; I crushed the lid in raising it; but you wished it, and your curiosity will be satisfied."

She could, in truth, satisfy her curiosity. She eagerly seized the bracelet, and on the back of the plate, now left bare, she saw, engraved in the gold, characters almost microscopic in size. Through the greatest attention she succeeded in deciphering them. She distinguished several dates, marking the year, the month, and the day, when some important event had occurred to the Princess Gulof. These dates, accompanied by no indication

of any kind, formerly sufficed to recall the principal experiments that she had practised on mankind before having discovered Samuel Brohl. The result had not been very cheerful, for beneath this form of calendar stood a confession of faith, thus expressed, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" This melancholy declaration was signed, and the signature was perfectly legible. Mlle. Moriaz spelled it out readily, although at that moment her sight was dim, and she was convinced that the trinket, which Count Larinski had presented to her as a family relic, had belonged to Anna Petrovna, Princess Gulof.

She grew mortally pale, and lost consciousness; she seemed on the verge of an attack of delirium. In the agitation of her mind, she imagined that she saw herself at a great distance, at the end of the world, and very small; she was climbing a mountain, on the other side of which there was a man awaiting her. She questioned herself, "Am I, or is this traveller, Mlle. Moriaz?" She closed her eyes, and saw a black abyss open before her, in which her life was ingulfed, whirled about, like the leaf of a tree in a whirlpool.

M. Langis drew near her, and, lightly slapping the palms of her hands, said, "What is the matter?"

She roused herself, made an effort to lift her head, and let it sink again. The trouble that lay in the depths of her heart choked her; she experienced an irresistible need of confiding in some one, and she judged that the man who was talking to her was one of those men to whom a woman can tell her secret, one of those souls to whom she could pour out her shame without blushing. She began, in a broken voice, a confused, disconnected recital that Camille could scarcely follow. However, he finally understood; he felt himself divided between an immense pity for her despair, and a fierce lover's joy that tightened his throat and well-nigh strangled him.

The belfry of Cormeilles had recovered its voice; two o'clock rang out on the air. Antoinette rose and exclaimed: "I was to meet him at the pretty little gate that you see from here! He will have the right to be angry if I keep him waiting."

At once she hastened towards the balustered steps that led from the terrace to the orchard. M. Langis followed her, seeking to detain her. "You need not see him again," said he. "I will meet him. Pray, charge me with your explanations."

She repelled him and replied, in a voice of

authority: "I wish to see him, no one but I can say to him what I have in my heart. I command you to remain here; I intend that he shall blame no one but me." She added, with a curl of the lips meant for a smile: "You must remember, I do not believe yet that I have been deceived; I will not believe it until I have read the lie in his eyes."

She hastily descended into the orchard, and, during five minutes, her eye fixed on the gate, she waited for Samuel Brohl. Her impatience counted the seconds, and yet Mlle. Moriaz could have wished the gate never would open. There was near by an old apple-tree that she loved; in the old days she had more than once suspended her hammock from one of its arched and drooping branches. She leaned against the gnarled trunk of the old tree. It seemed to her that she was not alone; some one protected her.

At last the gate opened and admitted Samuel Brohl, who had a smile on his lips. His first words were: "And your umbrella! You have forgotten it?"

She replied: "Do you not see that there is no sunshine?" And she remained leaning against the apple-tree.

He uplifted his hand to show her the blue

sky; he let it fall again. He looked at Antoinette, and he was afraid. He guessed immediately that she knew all. At once he grew audacious.

"I spent a dull day yesterday," said he. "Mme. de Lorcy invited me to dine with a crazy woman; but the night made up for it. I saw Engadine in my dreams—the firs, the Alpine pines, the emerald lakes, and a red hood."

"I, too, dreamed last night. I dreamed that the bracelet you gave me belonged to the crazy woman of whom you speak, and that she had her name engraved on it."

She threw him the bracelet: he picked it up, examined it, turned and returned it in his trembling fingers. She grew impatient. "Look at the place that has been forced open. Don't you know how to read?"

He read, and became stupefied. Who would have believed that this trinket that he had found among his father's old traps had come to him from Princess Gulof? that it was the price she had paid for Samuel Brohl's ignominy and shame? Samuel was a fatalist; he felt that his star had set, that Fate had conspired to ruin his hopes, that he was found guilty and condemned. His heart grew heavy within him.

"Can you tell me what I ought to think of a certain Samuel Brohl?" she asked.

That name, pronounced by her, fell on him like a mass of lead; he never would have believed that there could be so much weight in a human word. He trembled under the blow; then he struck his brow with his clinched hand and replied:

"Samuel Brohl is a man as worthy of your pity as he is of mine. If you knew all that he has suffered, all that he has dared, you could not help deeply pitying him and admiring him. Listen to me; Samuel Brohl is an unfortunate man——"

"Or a wretch!" she interrupted, in a terrible voice. She was seized by a fit of nervous laughter; she cried out: "Mme. Brohl! I will not be called Mme. Brohl. Ah! that poor Countess Larinski!"

He had a spasm of rage that would have terrified her had she conjectured what agitated him. He raised his head, crossed his arms on his breast, and said, with a bitter smile:

"It was not the man that you loved, it was the count."

She replied, "The man whom I loved never lied."

"Yes, I lied!" he cried, gasping for breath. "I drank that cup of shame without remorse or disgust. I lied because I loved you madly. I lied because you were dearer to me than my honour. I lied because I despaired of touching your heart, and any road seemed good that led to you. Why did I meet you? why could I not see you without recognising in you the dream of my whole life? Happiness had passed me by, it was about to take flight; I caught it in a trap—I lied. Who would not lie, to be loved by you?"

Samuel Brohl never had looked so handsome. Despair and passion kindled a sombre flame in his eyes; he had the sinister charm of a fiery Satan. He fixed on Antoinette a fascinating glance that said: "What matter my name, my lies, and the rest? My face is not a mask, and I am the man who pleased you." He had not the least suspicion of the astonishing facility with which Antoinette had taken back the heart that she had given away so easily; he did not suspect what miracles can be wrought by contempt. In the middle ages people believed in golems, figures in clay of an entrancing beauty, which had all the appearance of life. Under a lock of hair was written, in Hebrew characters, on their brow, the word "Truth." If they

chanced to lie, the word was obliterated; they lost all their charm, the clay was no longer anything but clay.

Mlle. Moriaz divined Samuel Brohl's thought; she exclaimed: "The man I loved was he whose history you related to me."

He would have liked to kill her, so that she never should belong to another. Behind Antoinette, not twenty steps distant, he descried the curb of a well, and grew dizzy at the sight. He discovered, with despair, that he was not made of the stuff for crime. He dropped down on his knees in the grass, and cried, "If you will not pardon me, nothing remains for me but to die!" She stood motionless and impassive. She repeated betwen her teeth Camille Langis's phrase: "I am waiting until this great comedian has finished playing his piece."

He rose and started to run towards the well. She was in front of him and barred the passage, but at the same moment she felt two hands clasp her waist, and the breath of two lips that sought her lips and that murmured, "You love me still, since you do not want me to die."

She struggled with violence and horror; she succeeded, by a frantic effort, in disengaging herself from his grasp. She fled towards the house.

Samuel Brohl rushed after her in mad pursuit; he was just reaching her, when he suddenly stopped. He had caught sight of M. Langis, hurrying from out a thicket, where he had been hidden. Growing uneasy, he had approached the orchard through a path concealed by the heavy foliage. Antoinette, out of breath, ran to him, gasping, "Camille, save me from this man!" and she threw herself into his arms, which closed about her with delight. He felt her sink; she would have fallen had he not supported her.

At the same instant a menacing voice saluted him with the words, "Monsieur, we will meet again!"

"To-day, if you will," he replied.

Antoinette's wild excitement had given place to insensibility; she neither saw nor heard; her limbs no longer sustained her. Camille had great difficulty in bringing her to the house; she could not ascend the steps of the terrace; he was obliged to carry her. Mlle. Moiseney saw him, and filled the air with her cries. She ran forward, she lavished her best care on her queen. All the time she was busy in bringing her to her senses she was asking Camille for explanations, to which she did not pay the least attention; she interrupted him at every word to exclaim: "This has been

designed, and you are at the bottom of the plot. I have suspected you—you owe Antoinette a grudge. Your wounded vanity never has recovered from her refusal, and you are determined to be revenged. Perhaps you flatter yourself that she will end by loving you. She does not love you, and she never will love you. Who are you, to dare compare yourself with Count Larinski? Be silent! Do I believe in Samuel Brohl? I do not know Samuel Brohl. I venture my head that there is no such person as Samuel Brohl."

"Not much of a venture, mademoiselle," replied M. Moriaz, who had arrived in the meantime.

Antoinette remained during an hour in a state of mute languor; then a violent fever took possession of her. When the physician who had been sent for arrived, M. Langis accompanied him into the chamber of the sick girl. She was delirious: seated upright, she kept continually passing her hand over her brow; she sought to efface the taint of a kiss she had received one moonlight night, and the impression in her hair of the flapping of a bat's wings that had caught in her hood. These two things were confounded in her memory. From time to time she said: "Where is my portrait? Give me my portrait."

It was about ten o'clock when M. Langis called on Samuel Brohl, who was not astonished to see him appear; he had hoped he would come. Samuel had regained self-possession. He was calm and dignified. However, the tempest through which he had gone had left on his features some vestige of its passage. His lips quivered, and his beautiful chestnut locks curled like serpents about his temples, and gave his head a Medusa-like appearance.

He said to Camille: "Where and when? Our seconds will undertake the arrangement of the rest."

"You mistake, monsieur, the motive of my visit," replied M. Langis. "I am grieved to destroy your illusions, but I did not come to arrange a meeting with you."

"Do you refuse to give me satisfaction?"

"What satisfaction do I owe you?"

"You insulted me."

"When?"

"And you said: 'The day, the place, the weapons. I leave all to your choice.'"

M. Langis could not refrain from smiling. "Ah! you at last acknowledge that your fainting-fit was comedy?" he rejoined.

"Acknowledge on your part," replied Samuel,

"that you insult persons when you believe that they are not in a state to hear you. Your courage likes to take the safe side."

"Be reasonable," replied Camille. "I placed myself at Count Larinski's disposal: you cannot require me to fight with a Samuel Brohl!"

Samuel sprang to his feet; with fierce bearing and head erect he advanced to the young man, who awaited him unflinchingly, and whose resolute manner awed him. He cast upon him a sinister look, turned, and reseated himself, bit his lips until the blood came; then said in a placid voice:

"Will you do me the favour of telling me, monsieur, to what I owe the honour of this visit?"

"I came to demand of you a portrait that Mlle. Moriaz is desirous of having returned."

"If I refuse to give it up, you will doubtless appeal to my delicacy?"

"Do you doubt it?" ironically replied Camille.

"That proves, monsieur, that you still believe in Count Larinski; that it is to him you speak at this moment?"

"You deceive yourself. I came to see Samuel Brohl, who is a business-man, and it is a commercial transaction that I intend to hold with him." And drawing from his pocket a porte-monnaie,

he added: "You see I do not come empty-handed."

Samuel settled himself in his arm-chair. Half closing his eyes, he watched M. Langis through his eye-lashes. A change passed over his features; his nose became more crooked, and his chin more pointed; he no longer resembled a lion, he was a fox. His lips wore the sugared smile of a usurer, one who lays snares for the sons of wealthy families, and who scents out every favourable case. If at this moment Jeremiah Brohl had seen him from the other world, he would have recognised his own flesh and blood.

He said at last to Camille: "You are a man of understanding, monsieur; I am ready to listen to you."

"I am very glad of it, and, to speak frankly, I had no doubts about it. I knew you to be very intelligent, very much disposed to make the best of an unpleasant conjuncture."

"Ah! spare my modesty. I thank you for your excellent opinion of me; I should warn you that I am accused of being greedy after gain. You will leave some of the feathers from your wings between my fingers."

For a reply M. Langis significantly patted the porte-monnaie which he held in his hand, and

which was literally stuffed with bank-notes. Immediately Samuel took from a locked drawer a casket, and proceeded to open it.

"This is a very precious gem," he said. "The medallion is gold, and the work on the miniature is exquisite. It is a master-piece—the colour equals the design. The mouth is marvellously rendered. Mengs or Liotard could not have done better. At what do you value this work of art?"

"You are more of a connoisseur than I. I will leave it to your own valuation."

"I will let you have the trinket for five thousand francs; it is almost nothing."

Camille began to draw out the five thousand francs from his porte-monnaie. "How prompt you are!" remarked Samuel. "The portrait has not only a value as a work of art; I am sure you attach a sentimental value to it, for I suspect you of being over head and ears in love with the original."

"I find you too greedy," replied Camille, casting on him a crushing glance.

"Do not be angry. I am accustomed to exercise methodical precision in business affairs. My father always sold at a fixed price, and I, too, never lower my charges. You will readily understand that what is worth five thousand francs to a

friend is worth double to a lover. This gem is worth ten thousand francs. You can take it or leave it."

"I will take it," replied M. Langis.

"Since we agree," continued Samuel, "I possess still other articles which might suit you."

"Why, do you think of selling me your clothing?"

"Let us come to an understanding. I have other articles of the same lot."

And he brought from a closet the red hood, which he spread out on the table.

"Here is an article of clothing—to use your own words—that may be of interest to you. Its colour is beautiful; if you saw it in the sunshine, it would dazzle you. I grant that the stuff is common—it is very ordinary cashmere—but if you deign to examine it closely, you will be struck by the peculiar perfume that it exhales. The Italians call it '*l'odor femminino.*'"

"And what is your rate of charge for the '*odor femminino?*'"

"I will be moderate. I will let you have this article and its perfume for five thousand francs. It is actually giving it away."

"Assuredly. We will say ten and five—that makes fifteen thousand."

"One moment. You can pay for all together. I have other things to offer you. One would say that the floor burned your feet, and that you could not endure being in this room."

"I allow that I long to leave this—what shall I say?—this shop, lair, or den."

"You are young, monsieur; it never does to hurry; haste causes us acts of forgetfulness that we afterwards regret. You would be very sorry not to take away with you these two scraps of paper."

At these words he drew from his note-book two letters, which he unfolded.

"Is there much more?" demanded Camille. "I fear that I shall become short of funds, and be obliged to go back for more."

"Ah! these two letters, I will not part with them for a trifle, the second especially. It is only twelve lines in length; but what pretty English handwriting! Only see! and the style is loving and tender. I will add that it is signed. Ah! monsieur, Mlle. Moriaz will be charmed to see these scrawls again. Under what obligations she will be to you! You will make the most of it; you will tell her that you wrested them from me, your dagger at my throat—that you terrified me. With what a gracious smile she will reward your

heroism! According to my opinion, that smile is as well worth ten thousand francs as the medallion —the two gems are of equal value."

"If you want more, it makes no difference."

"No, monsieur; I have told you I have only one price."

"At this rate, it is twenty-five thousand francs that I owe you. You have nothing more to sell me?"

"Alas! that is all."

"Will you swear it?"

"What, monsieur! you admit, then, that Samuel Brohl has a word of honour—that when he has sworn, he can be believed?"

"You are right; I am still very young."

"That is all, then, I swear to you," affirmed Samuel, sighing. "My shop is poorly stocked; I had begun laying in a supply, but an unfortunate accident deranged my little business."

"Bah! be consoled," replied M. Langis; "you will find another opportunity; a genius of such lofty flights as yours never is at a loss. You have been unfortunate; some day Fortune will compensate you for the wrongs she has done you, and the world will accord justice to your fine talents."

Speaking thus, he laid on the table twenty-five notes of a thousand francs each. He counted

them; Samuel counted them after him, and at once delivered to him the medallion, the hood, and the two letters.

Camille rose to leave. "Monsieur Brohl," he said, "from the first day I saw you, I formed the highest opinion of your character. The reality surpasses my expectations. I am charmed to have made your acquaintance, and I venture to hope that you are not sorry to have made mine. However, I shall not say, *au revoir*."

"Who knows?" replied Samuel, suddenly changing his countenance and attitude. And he added, "If you are fond of being astonished, monsieur, will you remain still another instant in this den?"

He rolled and twisted the twenty-five one-thousand-franc notes into lamp-lighters; then, with a grand gesture, *à la Poniatowski*, he approached the candle, held them in the flame until they blazed, and then threw them on the hearth, where they were soon consumed.

Turning towards M. Langis, he cried, "Will you now do me the honour of fighting with me?"

"After such a noble act as that, I can refuse you nothing," returned Camille. "I will do you that signal honour."

"Just what I desire," replied Samuel. "I am

the offended; I have the choice of arms." And, in showing M. Langis out, he said, "I will not conceal from you that I have frequented the shooting-galleries, and that I am a first-class pistol-shot."

Camille bowed and went out.

The next day, in a lucid interval, Mlle. Moriaz saw at the foot of her bed a medallion laid on a red hood. From that moment the physician announced an improvement in her symptoms.

CHAPTER XII

Six days after these events, Samuel Brohl, having passed through Namur and Liége without stopping at either place, arrived by rail at Aix-la-Chapelle. He went directly to the Hôtel Royal, close to the railroad-station; he ordered a hearty dinner to be served him, which he washed down with foaming champagne. He had an excellent appetite; his soul kept holiday; his heart was expanded, inflated with joy, and his brain intoxicated. He had revenged himself; he had meted out justice to that insolent fellow, his rival. Mlle. Moriaz did not belong to Samuel Brohl, but she never would belong to Camille Langis. Near the Franco-Belgian frontier, on the verge of a forest, a man had been shot in the breast; Samuel Brohl had seen him fall; and some one had cried, "He is dead!" It is asserted that Aix-la-Chapelle is a very dull city, that the very dogs suffer so sadly from ennui that they piteously beg passers-by to kick them, with a view to having a little excitement. Samuel never felt one moment's ennui during the evening that he spent in Charlemagne's

city. He had constantly in mind a certain spot in a forest, and a man falling; and he experienced a thrill of delight.

After the champagne, he drank punch, and after that he slept like a dormouse; unfortunately, sleep dissipated his exhilaration, and when he awoke his gaiety had left him. He had the fatal custom of reflecting; his reflections saddened him; he was revenged, but what then? He thought for a long while of Mlle. Moriaz; he gazed with melancholy eye at his two hands, which had allowed her and good fortune to elude their grasp.

He recited in a low voice some German verses, signifying:

"I have resolved to bury my songs and my dreams; bring me a large coffin. Why is this coffin so heavy? Because in it with my dreams I have laid away my love and my sorrows."

When he had recited these verses Samuel felt sadder than before, and he cursed the poets. "They did me great harm," he said, bitterly. "Without them I had spent days interwoven with gold and silk. My future was secure: it was they who gave me a distaste for my position. I believed in them; I was the dupe of their hollow declamation; they taught me thoughtless con-

tempt, and they gave me the sickly ambition to play the silly part of a man of fine sentiments. I despised the mud. Where am I now?"

He had formed the project of going to Holland and of embarking thence for America. What would he do in the United States? He did not know yet. He passed in review all the professions that at all suited him; they all required an outlay for first expenses. Thanks to God and to M. Guldenthal, whose loan was in the greatest danger, he was not destitute of all supplies. But a week previous he had held into the flames and burned twenty-five one-thousand-franc bills of the Bank of France. He felt some remorse for the act; he could not help thinking that a revenge that cost twenty-five thousand francs was an article of luxury of which poor devils should deprive themselves. In thinking over this adventure, it seemed to him that it was another than himself who had burned those bills, or at least that he had mechanically executed this *auto-da-fé* through a sort of thoughtless impulse, like a puppet moved by an invisible string. Suddenly the phantom with whom he had had frequent conversations appeared, and there was a sneer on its lips. Samuel addressed it once more—this was to be the last time; he said:

"Imbecile! You are my evil genius. It was you who caused me to commit this extravagance. You yourself lighted the candle, you put the bills into my hands, you guided my arm, extended it, held it above the fatal flame. This act of supreme heroism was your work; it is not I, it is you, who paid so dearly for the pleasure of astonishing one who wantonly insulted me, and of killing him. Cursed forever be the day when I assumed your name, and when I conceived the foolish notion of becoming your second self! I made myself a Pole: did Poland ever have the least idea of government? You of all men were the most incapable of making your way; I aped a poor model indeed. Abel Larinski, I break off all connection with you; I wind up the affairs of our firm, I put the key under the door, or drop it down the well. O my great Pole! I return to you your title, your name, and with your name all that you gave me—your pride, your pretensions, your dangerous delicacy, your attitudes, your sentimental grimaces, and your waving plume."

It was thus that Samuel Brohl took a decisive farewell of Count Abel Larinski, who might henceforth rest quietly in his grave; there was no further danger of a dead man being compromised by a living one. What name did Samuel Brohl

mean now to assume? Out of spite to his destiny, he chose for the time the humblest of all; he decided to call himself Kicks, which was his mother's name.

His melancholy would have known no bounds, had he suspected that Camille Langis was still in the world. Camille Langis for two weeks lay between life and death, but the ball had finally been successfully extracted. Mme. de Lorcy hastened to Mons and nursed him like a mother; she had the joy of bringing him back alive to Paris.

Care was taken that no mention of the duel should be made to Mlle. Moriaz, and not a word concerning it reached her; her condition for a long time caused the gravest anxiety. After she became convalescent she remained sunk in a gloomy, taciturn sadness. She never made the least allusion to what had passed, and would not permit any one to speak of it to her. She had been deceived, and a mortification, mingled with dread, was the result of her mistake. It seemed to her that nothing remained in life for her but remembrance and silence.

Towards the end of November, M. Moriaz proposed to her that they should return to Paris. She expressed her desire not to leave Cormeilles —to pass the winter in solitude; the human face

terrified her. M. Moriaz tried to represent to her that she was unreasonable.

"Will you wear eternal mourning for a stranger?" he asked; "for, in reality, the man that you loved you never saw. Ah! *mon Dieu*, you deceived, you deluded yourself. Is there, I will not say a single woman, but a single member of the Institute, who has not once been grossly imposed on? It is through the means of failures in experiments that science progresses."

And he rose to still higher considerations; he endeavoured to prove to her that, if it is bad to have erred, an excessive fear of erring is a still worse evil, because it is better to lose one's way than not to walk at all.

When he had finished his harangue, she said, shaking her head, "I have no longer faith in any one."

"What! not even in the brave fellow to whom you owe the recovery of your portrait and your letters?"

"Of whom do you speak?" she exclaimed.

Then he related to her how M. Langis had effected the descent into the den, without telling her what had resulted therefrom.

"Ah! that was kind, very kind," she said. "I never doubted that Camille was a true friend."

"A friend? Are you very sure that it is only friendship that he feels for you?"

Whereupon M. Moriaz told her all the rest. She grew pensive and sank into a reverie. Suddenly the door of the *salon* opened, and Camille entered. After inquiring after her health, he informed her that in consequence of a cold he, too, had been sick; and, as he was now free from business engagements, his physician was sending him to pass the winter in Sorrento.

She replied: "That is a journey that I would like to make. Will you take me with you?"

She gazed fixedly at him; there was everything in her gaze. He bent his knee before her, and for some moments they remained hand-in-hand, and eye to eye. In the midst of this, Mlle. Moiseney appeared, who, at sight of this *tableau vivant*, stood perfectly confounded.

"You are very much astonished, mademoiselle," said M. Moriaz to her.

"Not so much as you fancy, monsieur," replied she, recovering herself. "I did not dare to say it, but in my heart I always believed, always thought— Yes, I always was sure that it would end thus."

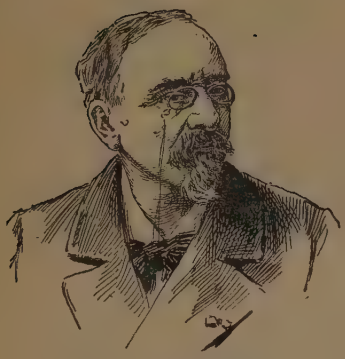
"God bless Pope Joan!" he cried; "I shall cease to correct her."

Samuel Brohl and Company

We have failed to learn what Samuel Brohl is doing in America. In waiting for something better, has he become an humble teacher? has he attempted a new matrimonial enterprise? has he become a reporter of the *New York Herald*, or a politician in one of the Northern States, or a carpet-bagger in South Carolina? does he dream of being some day President of the glorious republic with the starry banner?

Up to the present time, no American journal has devoted the shortest paragraph to him. Adventurers are beings who constantly vanish and reappear; they belong to the family of divers; but, after many plunges, they always end by some catastrophe. The wave supports the drowning man an instant, then bears him away and drags him down to the depths of the briny abyss; there is heard a splash, a ripple, a hoarse cry, followed by a smothered groan, and Samuel Brohl is no more! For some days the question is agitated whether his real name was Brohl, Kicks, or Larinski; soon something else is talked about, and his memory becomes a prey to eternal silence.

THE PORTRAITS OF VICTOR CHERBULIEZ



VICTOR CHERBULIEZ.
After a photograph about 1875.

BEFORE becoming a delightful master of the naturalistic school, Victor Cherbuliez, son and nephew of celebrated scholars, was in the first place a learner, who sought among the symbolisms of the past, and in the writings of the Ancients, for the true feeling of grace and beauty. His talent, like that of Taine and Renan, first awakened by contact with the monuments of the Hellenes, modelled and formed itself on the outlines of the Acropolis. In like manner, his face with its beautiful, regular features, its grave forehead whereon Pallas Athene had stamped thought, its limpid eyes reflecting the waters of the Hellespont and the lakes of Switzerland, and the serenity of the expression, form a venerable whole.

The Portraits of Victor Cherbuliez

On page 351 is a picture of Victor Cherbuliez at forty years of age, and already celebrated. He wears an eye-glass on his aquiline nose, his beard is short and thick. In many respects the head reminds us of the serious and expressive features of Taine. Here, as with the father of *Thomas Graindorge*, is the meditative and introspective look, the broad forehead where thought dwells.

VICTOR CHERBULIEZ.
A sketch from life about 1887.

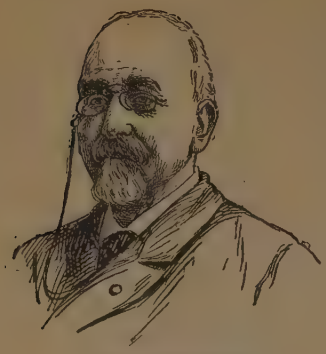
A Genevese, like Cabin and Jean Jacques Rousseau, Victor Cherbuliez bears in his physiognomy less severity than the former, a more subdued and less passionate flame than the latter. As in his writings, the features of the gifted academician reflect the calm peacefulness of the country of his childhood. The lines are clean-cut and regular, bearing a gentle psychology.

The second picture of Victor Cherbuliez shows him more advanced in years, with a pipe in his

mouth, like an old game-keeper. He is smiling affably, with a roguish look in his eyes, and resembles a rustic and good-natured Anatole France. He is more of a philosopher, more benevolent, more completely serene. One guesses, as one looks at him, that he is a member of the Academy, and that he is chuckling to himself as he philosophically watches the world from his peaceful hermitage of the Rue de Tournon.

In the third portrait which we reproduce of this amiable "immortal," Victor Cherbuliez has become more venerable. He is balder, but still shows the same affability and gentleness. The years have passed over him. The author of *Samuel Brohl*, *La Ferme du Choquart*, of *Olivier Maugant* has seen good work grow with the seasons. Hair, mustache, royal are already tinged with silver. The eyes, so gentle in expression, betray the novelist of worth, the sagacious thinker, whose long and courageous career, beautiful in its rectitude and modesty, began with such ardour, and ended so peacefully.

If there be any truth in the saying that men and places resemble each other, by dint of penetrating into and reflecting each other, the noble and kindly face of Victor Cherbuliez is to us a typical figure of the whiteness of those venerable, snow-

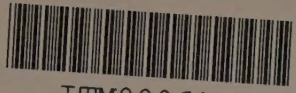


VICTOR CHERBULIEZ.
After one of his last photographs.

clad peaks of the Alps. Their aspect is peaceful and reposeful enough; but out of that Alpine stillness often bursts forth a destructive torrent. Thus this simple and kindly man, who under his smiling face hid a heart easily moved, whose eyes, protected by the everlasting eye-glass, never could entirely conceal the infinite goodness—poured out, all through his novels, a wealth of idealistic passion.

Cherbuliez never came under the spell of art. He lived the life of an ordinary citizen, and had not much contact with portrait-painters. No oil-painting, no bust of him exists. We have published, as frontispiece, the only original engraving which has been done of this perfect gentleman. His iconography is limited to the few pictures of him, already middle-aged, which we have been able to reproduce here. There is no medallion, no miniature, no statuette to aid us in our description of him. Even the Museum of Geneva possesses no souvenir with which to recall the man who honoured the great Helvetic city by the uprightness of his talent.

OCTAVE UZANNE.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